Hafa Adai!

DFW OK with gill net fishing on Saipan, but MINA opposes. PAGE 2

Foremost, Coca-Cola honor staff for 45, 35 years of service. PAGE 6

$1

Saipan Tribune

ASH WEDNESDAY
A priest makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of parishioners at the Kristo Rai Parish Church using ashes from burnt coconut fronds during yesterday's observance of Ash Wednesday, which signals the start of Advent, as observed through much of Christendom.
KIMBERLY B. ESMORES

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TO SOLVE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS

Forum lays out NMI's cards

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The source of the CNMI's current economic malaise and solutions to help it recover from knockout blows brought by super typhoons, COVID-19, and government financial mismanagement were discussed yesterday during the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Inaugural Economic Forum at the Kensington Hotel Saipan.

See FORUM on Page 4

MARK RABAGO
Gov. Arnold I. Palacios delivers his opening remarks at the start of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's Economic Forum yesterday at the Kensington Hotel Saipan.

CNMI mourns loss of ex-lawmaker Kaipat

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang joined the Marianas yesterday in mourning the loss of former representative Cinta M. Kaipat, who passed away yesterday.

It was not immediately learned what caused Kaipat's death but she had been diagnosed with endometrial cancer in 2011, a type of cancer that affects the uterus.

Palacios and Apatang said in a statement yesterday that Kaipat's commitment to the people of the CNMI, including her service as a representative in the 15th Commonwealth Legis-

See KAIPAT on Page 4

CPA could raise fees due to lack of funding

King-Hinds

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Because federal funds previously allocated to the agency is running thin, there is a likelihood that the Commonwealth Ports Authority will have to raise its fees for all those doing business

See CPA on Page 4

Pollution response exercise on Rota, Tinian

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard worked with officials on Rota and Tinian to test their response capabilities under national requirements and

See POLLUTION on Page 4

U.S. COAST GUARD
Members of the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam Incident Management Division, alongside personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Planning and Disaster Response Advisory Team, conducted a series of operations on Rota on Feb. 8, 2023. The team conducted a conducted boom deployment in the port of Rota alongside the Department of Public Safety and the Rota Harbormaster to test a proposed geographic response strategy.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc. or MARPAC, celebrated its 50th anniversary Monday night.
PAGE 11

NATION
President Joe Biden is wrapping up his whirlwind, four-day visit to Poland and Ukraine.
PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
From the first days of the war, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has inspired Ukrainians to fight.
PAGE 15

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

DFW OKs gill net fishing on Saipan, but MINA opposes

The Division of Fish Wildlife wants to incorporate some amendments that supports the intent of a bill that seeks to authorize the use of gill nets, locally known as "tekking," on Saipan and the Northern Islands.

Mariana Islands Nature Alliance executive director Roberta Guerrero, on the other hand, opposes the legislation, saying it will have an immediate and long-lasting negative impact on Saipan's lagoon ecosystem.

"Although there is a perception that this method of fishing is sustainable, it is not, and not only fish will be affected; coral, seagrass, our shorelines, and our children's resources will be negatively impacted," said Guerrero in her comments on House Bill 23-5.

Rep. Denita Kaipat Yangetmai (D-Saipan) re-introduced the gill nets bill, House Bill 23-5, which is now before the House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee.

Under the bill, nets known as "tekking" or "gill nets" will be regulated by the Department of Lands and Natural Resources.

During the Committee members' meeting in the office of Rep. John Paul Sablan yesterday, Yangetmai said she has no problem incorporating the recommendations of DFW director Manny M. Pangelinan.

In his comment on the legislation, Pangelinan, proposed amendments to address the forfeiture of assets, a minimum and maximum fine for offense committed, and to include a fine and not just the suspension of a business license.

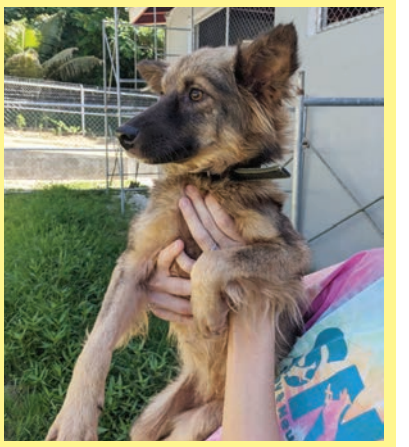
In his letter on Feb. 3, 2023 to committee chair Rep. Angelo Camacho (Ind-Saipan), Pangelinan also recommended that any fines and funds generated by the enforcement

See DFW on Page 4

PET OF THE WEEK

Fluffy

This is Fluffy! She's a 2-year-old small/medium-sized female dog with a short tail and long, fluffy coat, hence her name. Her beautiful fur is multiple shades of brown. She has unique coloring and a sweet personality. She is always wagging her short, stumpy tail and just wants to be taken home to be loved and played with.



She is available for adoption at the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido. Dogs adopted there come with vaccination and discounted flea and tick medicine. The registration fee is $30 per dog. There are many friendly dogs and puppies waiting to find their forever home so come check them out!

Shelter hours are from Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 4:30pm. Contact them at (670)-234-3647 (DOGS).

Saipan Tribune is partnering with Lauren Cabrera, co-founder of the Boonie Flight Project of Guam, in collaboration with the Saipan Mayor's Office Animal Shelter in As Perdido, to feature their adoptable dogs into loving homes. Whether you are looking for a guard dog, lap dog, hiking buddy, or playful puppy, they most likely have the dog for you!

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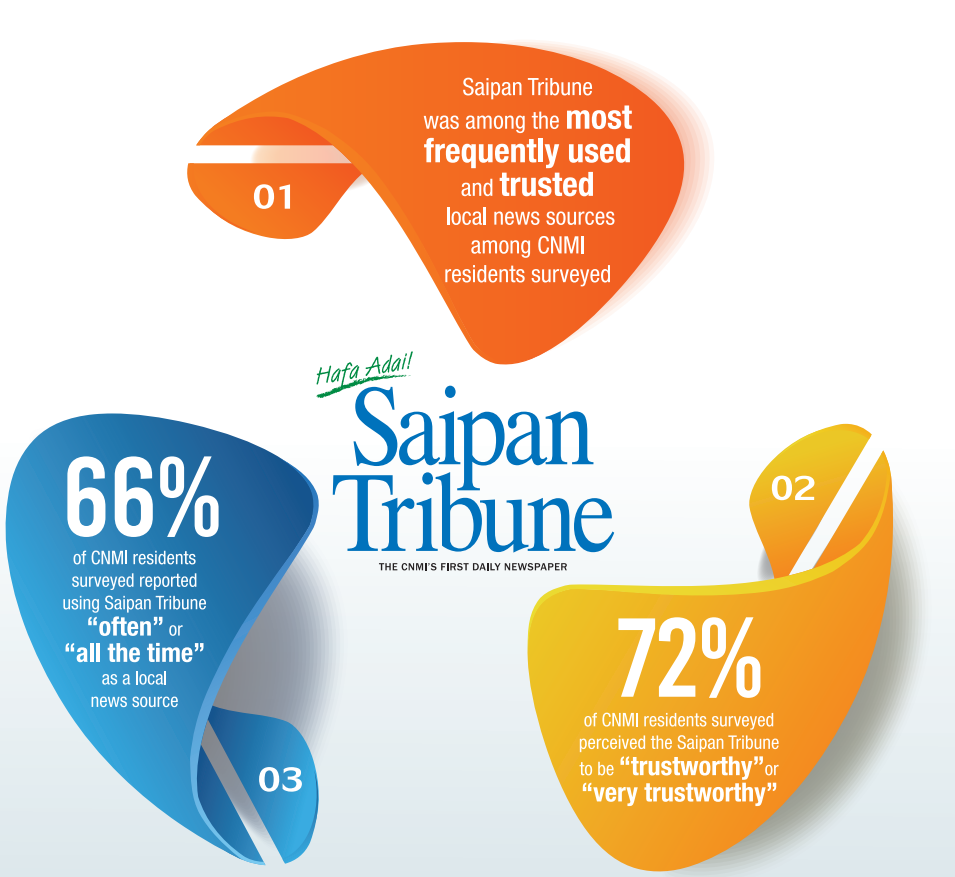
01
Saipan Tribune was among the most frequently used and trusted local news sources among CNMI residents surveyed
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
66%
of CNMI residents surveyed reported using Saipan Tribune "often" or "all the time" as a local news source
02
72%
of CNMI residents surveyed perceived the Saipan Tribune to be "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy"
03

NEWS USE AND PERCEPTIONS

Use and Perceived Trustworthiness of Media as Sources of Local News*

*Source:
i Minagåhet – Ellet: Reporting the Truth in the Northern Mariana Islands by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council
A study regarding news media use and perceptions, news media literacy, civic engagement, and community values in the Northern Mariana Islands

https://www.nmhcouncil.org/mediasurvey2022/

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COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP23-CHCC/EHDP-006
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DISEASE PREVENTION (EHDP)

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION SERVICES-EHDP LABORATORY"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA NO.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2023-010	CDBG-DR Compliance Specialist (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 Per annum	Feb. 15, 2023	March 2, 2023 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

WEATHER ADVISORIES

Rip currents until Friday afternoon

The public is being warned that there is a high risk of rip currents through Friday afternoon.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, dangerous rip currents are present in east-facing reefs of the Marianas. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

The public is being reminded to stay out of the water along east facing reef lines. Swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, relax and float. Don't swim against the current. If able, swim in a direction following the shoreline. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help. ***(PR)***

Warning out vs rough seas

A small craft advisory remains in effect until 4pm Friday. This means that wind speeds of 20 to 25 knots are expected to produce wave conditions hazardous to small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, northeast to east winds of 20 to 25 knots and seas of 7 to 10 feet are expected starting Thursday along Marianas coastal waters. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

The incoming north swell and strengthening trade swell may continue to produce sea conditions hazardous to small craft during the weekend, so the small craft advisory may be extended if conditions warrant.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, should avoid boating in these hazardous conditions. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Superior Court to draw prospective jurors

Pursuant to 7 CMC § 3106, notice is hereby given that the Clerk of the Superior Court will be publicly drawing prospective jurors for Panels 23AS, 23BS, 23CS, 23DS, 23ES, 23FS, 23GS, 23HS, 23IS, 23JS, 23KS, 23LS, 23MS, 23NS, 23OS, 23PS, 23QS, 23RS, 23SS, 23TS, 23US, 23VS, 23WS, 23XS, 23YS, and 23ZS on March 3, 2023, at 10am before Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho in Courtroom 220A of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Superior Court. ***(PR)***

Scheduled power service interruption on Feb. 27

There will be a power service interruption on Monday, Feb. 27, 2023, in Kagman III.

- Time: 1pm to 5pm
- Area affected: Kagman 3 (Phase 1, 2, 4, and partial area of Phase 3) Kagman Community Center, Kagman Fire Station, Kagman Elementary School, Chacha Ocean View Middle School, and Kagman High Schoo 1.
- Purpose: To replace 3

See POWER on Next Page

FORUM

From Page 1

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, who gave the opening remarks, enjoined members of the Chamber and everyone that "it cannot be business as usual" as the Commonwealth tackles the current financial crisis.

"The challenges we face today require the entire Commonwealth as a whole—including government agencies, legislative leaders, private sector companies, nonprofit organizations, together with our partners in the federal government—to think outside of the proverbial box." ***See related column on Page 9.***

Palacios said over the last six weeks he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang appointed qualified individuals to critical Cabinet positions and agencies as well as shored up relationships with federal partners and allies in the region.

"I was in our nation's capital a few days ago, speaking before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and top level federal officials at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on Insular Affairs. …I emphasized the vital role the Marianas plays in the security of our nation and America's position in our region. And I asked for help," he said.

Palacios said he also urged Congress to pass key legislative initiatives, including Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's H.R. 560, the Population Stabilization Act, and amend the U.S. Workforce Act to repeal the touchback provision.

The governor also announced his plan to form a Governor's Small Business Advisory Council.

"Because we know that small businesses are truly the backbone of a healthy local economy, I am announcing today that I am accepting nominations and letters of interest from individuals who wish to serve in a voluntary capacity…I want to be sure that I am hearing the voices and recommendations of our small businesses on the issues and policies that affect them, and by extension the wider economy," he said.

Northern Marianas College president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, who was the keynote speaker, championed building intellectual capital to attain and sustain economic growth, pointing to Hong Kong and Singapore as examples. He said the college is trying to make this happen by introducing innovative programs and courses.

Deleon Guerrero said NMC is also building the islands' intellectual capital by applying for a Sea Grant designation, supporting more academic research, upgrading two-year degrees into four-year degrees, and developing graduate degrees.

CNMI economist Matthew Guerrero tackled the source of the islands' economic troubles by zeroing in on the imbalance between exports and imports.

Driven by consumer demand and based on the latest figures from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the CNMI imported $597 million of goods and services compared to just $111 million it exported.

He said therein lies the problem as more money is flowing out of the CNMI ($597 million) than money that enters the islands ($111 million). This especially became problematic during the COVID-19 pandemic, as fewer airlines flew to the CNMI to bring in tourists.

He also referred to businesses that cater to tourists as "factories" and as all the "factories" essentially closed in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, the CNMI economy plummeted to record lows.

Acting Labor secretary Leila Staffler shared the current challenges within her agency, including filling in the big hole left by American Rescue Plan Act funding, lack/limitation of real-time data, desire to work with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on the CW renewal process, as well as need for legislation and policy review on the following: establishment of a state apprenticeship program establishment of a contractors licensing to fund apprenticeships in construction trades, establishment of a CNMI Unemployment Insurance Program, updates to enforcement statutes, and updates to the CNMI minimum wage law.

Employment Services director Eugene Tebuteb, meanwhile, shared that the CNMI's unemployment rate rose from 10.5% in 2017 to 14.1% in 2020, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.

Saipan has the biggest number of unemployed at 10.8% followed by Rota at 9% and Tinian at 6.8%.

The current challenges to shoring up tourist numbers from the CNMI's main tourist markets of South Korea and Japan were discussed by Marianas Visitors Authority chair Gloria Cavanagh.

She said challenges from the Korea market are airline operating cost, the vaccination requirement to enter the CNMI, and MVA's limited marketing budget.

Cavanagh said airlines are hesitant to add flights as operating costs are getting higher and the yield and revenue is not competitive compared to other destinations.

Meanwhile, Koreans' full vaccination rate is 87%, and competing destinations do not require vaccination anymore unlike the U.S. which the CNMI is a part of.

Lastly, she said the MVA's allocated destination marketing budget for Korea has been slashed.

Factors hindering the Japanese from traveling to the CNMI include Japan's national travel discount program that has made domestic travel affordable, limited and negative media coverage of overseas travel, the exchange rate has changed over 20% compared to December 2019, the low vaccination rate among children and family market in Japan, and fuel surcharge and high travel cost.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

KAIPAT

From Page 1

lature, will never be forgotten.

They said Kaipat's steadfast advocacy for the preservation of cultural practices and beliefs, together with her unwavering commitment to the protection of the CNMI's precious natural resources, will leave a lasting legacy for the ages.

"We express our deepest condolences to the friends and family of former representative Kaipat, and ask all of our community to offer their prayers and thoughts to all those she has impacted and inspired with her generosity, activism, and friendship," Palacios and Apatang said.

Kaipat's Facebook page was flooded yesterday with numerous messages of people who remember her passion and love for the CNMI and its people and her advocacies.

Attorney Viola Alepuyo said it is a very sad day as the Marianas has lost a daughter and a champion.

"Cinta loved our people, our community, and our islands. She tirelessly fought to protect the Marianas not just for our generation, but for our children and their children," Alepuyo said.

She said she will always remember her sister and will never forget her fighting spirit or her love for the people and the Marianas.

Kaipat served as a member of the 15th CNMI Legislature representing Precinct 1, from 2006 to 2008. She served as deputy secretary of the CNMI Department of Labor in 2008.

She founded Beautify CNMI, a coalition of volunteers from the government, private sector, and community members dedicated to make the CNMI a good place to live and visit.

From 1999 to December 2005, she worked as an administrative hearing officer for the CNMI Department of Labor.

In 2018, then-governor Ralph DLG Torres appointed Kaipat to serve in the Marianas Visitors Authority.

CPA

From Page 1

with CNMI airports.

In an interview with CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, she said that CPA is looing at exhausting all its American Rescue Plan Act funding by the end of this fiscal year and, if not remedied, the CNMI will suffer one way or another.

"No one is talking about the fact that the CPA has been in austerity even before the pandemic. That's a reflection of the state of the economy. That is an issue that people need to start talking about. At the end of this fiscal year, we would have exhausted federal funds. This year's budget is being mostly supported by ARPA funds and we have stretched it out as much as we can. The worst-case scenario is we lay off people and we operate at a very limited level. If we don't find a remedy for our current situation, its either that or we pass on the charges. The alternative is it's going to be very expensive to land here and it's not going to be enticing to airlines," she said.

King-Hinds explained that if CPA does not find another funding source after ARPA has been completed exhausted, airline partners and the traveling public will be impacted. This, in turn, will ultimately affect the CNMI's tourism recovery.

"What does this mean for CPA in the next year? We are going to have to pass off whatever charges to our airline partners and the traveling public, which is going to make it very expensive to travel to the CNMI. That's going to be a challenge for the tourism industry and we're try to avoid that," she said.

"How we're going about it is we're reaching out to our federal partners, much like at the beginning of the pandemic, saying that we are not similarly situated as places like Hawaii and Guam who have alternative source markets. We only have three; China which remains offline and makes up 41% of our market; we have Japan, which is still recovering; and we have Korea," King-Hinds added.

POLLUTION

From Page 1

conduct area familiarization in the week of Feb. 6, 2023.

Members of the U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia Sector Guam Incident Management Division, alongside personnel from the U.S. Coast Guard District 14 Planning and Disaster Response Advisory Team, conducted a series of operations on Rota and Tinian, part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, in the second week of February.

"As part of the national preparedness for a response exercise program, response plan holders may be required to participate in a GIUE. These exercises are pass-fail to ensure the facility team can respond to an event promptly, such as getting actual containment and exclusion boom and skimming equipment into use," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Tomas Dunning, a marine safety technician and part of the exercise team.

On Feb. 6, the team conducted the first exercise, a Government Initiated Unannounced Exercise, or GIUE, with Mobil Rota. Mobil Rota successfully passed and is exempt from another exercise in the next three years.

On Feb. 7, the same U.S. Coast Guard team conducted a boom deployment in the port of Rota. The U.S. Coast Guard DRAT maintains two trailers of boom equipment, one on Rota and the other in Tinian, to assist local responders. Such gear is limited and not readily available on remote islands.

"[On] Rota, we used the prepositioned boom working alongside the CNMI Department of Public Safety and the Rota Harbormaster to test a proposed geographic response strategy," said Dunning.

The team deployed 200 feet of boom in assistance with DPS' boat and crew across the entrance to the port. The team determined the geographic response strategy would work in a real-world situation and recommended 250 feet of boom.

"This exercise allowed us to see if it was a realistic way to contain a potential discharge at the port. As a result, DPS becomes an asset familiar with the boom's location and how to deploy it in their vessel. In a real scenario, we know DPS could reliably assist with early stages of response," said Dunning.

On Feb. 8, the team flew to Tinian to check on the other trailer, replacing part of the hitch and identifying other items for repair or replacement, ensuring readiness. In addition, it allowed unit members to become more familiar with the region and the ports in CNMI. ***(USCG)***

DFW

From Page 2

shall be deposited into a non-lapsing revolving fund and shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation and without fiscal limitation. To ensure that DFW can implement this proposed law without affecting the current fisheries resources population, he said a subsection should be included, stating that DFW shall conduct a fisheries resource assessment to determine the baseline information of the fisheries resources at the designated fishing grounds.

Yangetmai said they were down on Tinian and Rota last year with the Fish and Wildlife people and they're fine with gill net fishing and don't understand why it's not allowed on Saipan.

Yangetmai suggested restricting this to those of Northern Marianas descent only. Rep. Joel Camacho (Ind-Saipan) stated that it's like saying only NMDs can drive 35 miles per hour and the rest cannot.

House legal counsel John Bradley said it sounds like there's so many opinions that it would be a good idea to let people have a chance to comment. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

POWER

From Page 3

burnt primary power poles along Gaogao Drive, and to replace a rotted wood power pole to concrete pole along Alageta Drive

■ Water well(s) affected: KG-13, KG-14, K16, KG-21, KG-22 and KG-23. Water service to Kagman may be affected based on tank level.

■ Wastewater facility affected: None

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates. ***(PR)***

Kagman cluster of schools PTSA meeting

This is to inform all parents, guardians, and the community that the Kagman cluster of schools (Kagman Elementary School, Chacha Ocean View Middle School, and Kagman High School) will be having a PTSA meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 5:30pm, at the Chacha Ocean View Middle School cafeteria. We are encouraging all parents and guardians to attend this meeting. Call the schools at 237-3150, 237-3165, or 664-3781 if you have any questions or concerns. ***(PR)***

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Foremost, Coca-Cola honor staff for 45, 35 yrs. of service

Foremost Foods, Inc. and Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Guam), Inc. continue this year their time-honored tradition of recognizing longtime employees at the annual service awards presentation recently held at the corporate headquarters and distribution facility.

Manuel "Manny" Alvarez, the business development/vending supervisor of Foremost and Coca-Cola, was recognized for 45 years of service, making him the longest serving employee of the leading non-alcoholic beverage companies in Guam, the Northern Marianas, and Micronesia.

John Panaguiton, a distribution specialist of Foremost and Coca-Cola and the third employee who has reached the 35-year milestone with the companies, also received a plaque of recognition.

"I just hope that this would continue on. It's rare for employees to stay with you that long. I want to commend Manny and John for their dedication and loyalty," Janice Castro, distribution and facilities manager of Foremost and Coca-Cola, said of Alvarez and Panaguiton.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median employee tenure of wage and salary employees as of January 2022 was 4.1 years.

Alvarez has surpassed nearly elevenfold and Panaguiton by more than eight and a half times the national average number of years workers had been with their current employer.

Manuel Alvarez, left, business development and vending supervisor, and John Panaguiton, distribution specialist, both of Foremost Foods, Inc. and Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Guam), Inc. receive their respective service awards for 45 years and 35 years of employment with the leading non-alcoholic beverage companies in Guam, Northern Marianas, and Micronesia during the 2023 Service Awards ceremony for longtime employees held recently the Foremost and Coca-Cola corporate headquarters in Barrigada Heights.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

For someone who started on the job as a replacement for his brother who "could not stand the cold" of the frozen food and cold storage facility at the Foremost plant, Alvarez has set the record for longevity of tenure.

When he started working for Foremost on Dec. 10, 1977, as an ice bagger when he was in his 20s, Alvarez said he applied to replace his brother. "Actually, I was not the one that was hired by Foremost; it was my younger brother, but he could not handle the cold inside the freezer. So, I decided to apply for the job. I submitted my application and started that day."

Over the years, Alvarez learned the many facets of beverage manufacturing from production to product distribution. He stayed the longest in the latter. His job knowledge grew in lockstep with opportunities for advancement. He moved up the corporate ladder from route supervisor to sales supervisor to sales manager for the water distribution business.

At first, Alvarez felt that he was out of depth to run the water business and he came clean with his employer about his inchoate management skills. In response to his candor, not only was Alvarez provided with training in the U.S. to prepare him for the management job, but he was also empowered by the company leadership with a nugget of wisdom that he would carry to this day.

"The president of the company said to me, 'Manny, when you make a mistake, correct it and that's how you'll learn.' He let me make my own decisions and so I learned by trial and error," Alvarez said.

Alvarez notes his hands-on management style with characteristic self-directed humor.

"I treat my guys the same way I want to be treated. Nobody can say I'm bossy, but I'm straightforward. I don't put myself above them—I work with them, I sweat with them, and we finish the work together. When a member of my team is out, I would cover their route. That's why I didn't grow up because it's heavy," he said

Having been married for 40 years to the love of his life, Pacita Calimlim-Alvarez, whom he met in Guam and with whom he has raised two generations of their family—two daughters and seven grandchildren on whom he dotes—and being with the same company for 45 years this far, Alvarez says he's in a happy place in life.

Although Alvarez says he stays active both on the job and at home and does not plan on retiring anytime soon, it's not all work for the native of Baguio, in the northern Philippines. When he's not puttering in the yard on weekends, the 5-handicap golfer is putting on the fairways with his golf buddies from work. He learned his way around the golf course early by caddying part-time at Camp John Hay.

When asked what his secret to longevity at work is, Alvarez says it's his love of work and the people in it.

"Love your work. Enjoy your job. Treat people right and you'll be happy. If you like what you're doing, you'll stay a long time," Alvarez said.

Panaguiton shares in the belief that happiness in his job is key to his tenure of 35 years running.

Seven years after he moved to Guam from his native Iloilo, in Western Visayas in the the Philippines, Panaguiton was 28 years old when he started working for Foremost as a dairy driver in November 1987. Back then, he would be up earlier than the cock crowed to complete the milk delivery to southern schools before 6 in the morning.

"We used to wake up very early at 3 o'clock in the morning because we had to be at the schools before 6 o'clock. My route was mostly south starting from Yona, Talofofo, Merizo all the way to Umatac," Panaguiton recollected.

He credits his mental and physical discipline for his tenacity at work.

"Even when you have to wake up early or when there's bad weather you can do the job as long as you can handle your mind and body," Panaguiton said. "I started in dairy and drove the Chammorita ice cream truck for six or seven years. Then I transferred to ice delivery. When I was on the ice route for 12 years, I would load 50 bags of ice and each bag of ice weighed 10 lbs. So that's 500 lbs. or a quarter of a ton. Sometimes I would drop 250 bags to Agat Kimchee or Big Navy."

Panaguiton dedicates his 35-year service award to his family—his wife, their two daughters and three grandchildren, and to the company.

To the new generation of employees he said, "Always be devoted to your family, stay focused on the job and be nice to everyone. When you feel that you cannot handle the job alone, stop and get help."

Foremost and Coca-Cola are the leading dairy and non-alcoholic beverage distributors serving Guam, the Northern Marianas, and Micronesia since 1950. For career opportunities, visit https://glimpsesofguam.com/careers/ or email allhr@coke- foremost.com. ***(PR)***

NOTICE OF OPEN AUCTION

2019 KIA SOUL 5DR SEDAN HB (Color: Gray)
48,881 Miles
Condition: Poor
MINIMUM BID: $8,000.00

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned counsel, Attorney Robert T. Torres (or his designee), for and on behalf of the Bank of Guam, will sell at auction the abovementioned vehicle to the highest bidder on March 1, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya.

Terms and Conditions of Sale

1. Rights and Duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties conduting the auction sale:
   a) withdraw the chattel mortgage (vehicle) listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such chattel mortgage (vehicle) is accepted;
   b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before the chattel mortgage (vehicle) is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever there; and
   c) to reject any and all bids.

2. Minimum Bid. The minimum bid for the sale of the abovementioned vehicle is **$8,000.00.** No advanced bids will be accepted. The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties. **Bidders must be present in person at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, 5962 Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya at 10:00 a.m. to bid.** All bids less than $8,000.00 are rejected. Any person who registers his/her bid shall provide a vaild identification card (vaild CNMI Driver's License or Passport). The winning bidder shall be the person whom the vehicle is confirmed to, if the bid is accepted.

3. Payment. The entire purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. **Personal checks /company checks are not accepted.** All payments must be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check only. The Bank of Guam shall release the chattel mortgage to the winning bidder. Failure to make payment will result the winning bidder forfeiting his/her winning bid. The next highest bidder (minimum $8,000.00) may be awarded.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the term conducted and enforcement of sale by the announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by the constructive notice.

DATED this 3rd day of February, 2023.

/s/_____
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

NOTICE OF SECOND OPEN AUCTION

2014 TOYOTA COROLLA 4DR SEDAN (Color: Red)
114,957 Miles
Condition: Fair
MINIMUM BID: $5,000.00

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned counsel, Attorney Robert T. Torres or his designee, for and on behalf of the Bank of Guam, will sell at auction the abovementioned vehicle to the highest bidder on March 1, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. Rights and Duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties conduting the auction sale:
   a) withdraw the chattel mortgage (vehicle) listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such chattel mortgage (vehicle) is accepted;
   b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before the chattel mortgage (vehicle) is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever there; and
   c) to reject any and all bids.

2. Minimum Bid. The minimum bid for the sale of the abovementioned vehicle is **$5,000.00** No advanced bids will be accepted. The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties. **Bidders must be present, in person, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, 5962 Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya on March 1, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. to bid.** All bids less than $5,000.00 will be rejected. Any person who registers his/her bid shall provide a vaild identification card (vaild CNMI Driver's License or Passport). The winning bidder shall be the person whom the vehicle is confirmed to, if the bid is accepted.

3. Payment. The entire purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. **Personal checks /company checks are not accepted.** All payments must be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check. The Bank of Guam shall release the chattel mortgage to the winning bidder. Failure to make payment will result in the forfeiture of the accepted bid. The next highest bidder (minimum $5,000.00) may be awarded.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the term conducted and enforcement of sale by the announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by the constructive notice.

DATED this 3rd day of February, 2023.

/s/_____
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

NOTICE OF SECOND OPEN AUCTION

2017 MITSUBISHI LANCER 4 Door Sedan (Color: Silver)
81,515 Miles
Condition: Poor
MINIMUM BID: $4,000.00

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the undersigned counsel, Attorney Robert T. Torres or his designee, for and on behalf of the Bank of Guam, will sell at auction the abovementioned vehicle to the highest bidder on March 1, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres in Chalan Kiya.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. Rights and Duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer or his designee shall have the following rights and duties conduting the auction sale:
   a) withdraw the chattel mortgage (vehicle) listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before a bid for such chattel mortgage (vehicle) is accepted;
   b) to adjourn the sale without notice at any time before the chattel mortgage (vehicle) is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever there; and
   c) to reject any and all bids.

2. Minimum Bid. The minimum bid for the sale of the abovementioned vehicle is **$4,000.00.** No advanced bids will be accepted. The vehicle will be sold to the highest bidder "as is, where is" without any warranties. **Bidders must be present, in person, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, 5962 Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya on March 1, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. to bid**. All bids less than $4,000.00 will be rejected. Any person who registers his/her bid shall provide a vaild identification card (vaild CNMI Driver's License or Passport). The winning bidder shall be the person whom the vehicle is confirmed to, if the bid is accepted.

3. Payment. The entire purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. **Personal checks /company checks are not accepted.** All payments must be made by cash, money order, or cashier's check. The Bank of Guam shall release the chattel mortgage to the winning bidder. Failure to make payment will result in the forfeiture of the accepted bid. The next highest bidder (minimum $4,000.00) may be awarded.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the term conducted and enforcement of sale by the announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by the constructive notice.

DATED this 6th day of February 2023.

/s/_____
Robert T. Torres, Auctioneer

ROTA ENGAGEMENT

Royal Australian Air Force members and U.S. Air Force amen pose with Rota residents at a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

Royal Australian Air Force Flight Lt. Toby Richter, C-27 Spartan pilot, is interviewed by local media at a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

Royal Australian Air Force Flight Lt. Toby Richter, C-27J Spartan pilot, poses with children at a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

Children check out a C-27 Spartan at a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

A U.S. airman entertains children at a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

Royal Australian Air Force members and U.S. airmen host a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

Royal Australian Air Force members and U.S. airmen host a community engagement event during Cope North 2023 on Rota last Feb. 17, 2023.

U.S. AIR FORCE/TECH. SGT. JAO'TOREY JOHNSON

NOTICE OF INTENT TO FILE A DISSOLUTION

Please take notice that Deloitte & Touche LLC and Deloitte & Touche LLP intend to file articles of dissolution with the CNMI Registrar of Corporations anytime after this notice is made.

Anyone with a claim against the corporations is requested to submit it in accordance with the following:

1. The claim shall be made in writing and shall state the name of the claimant, the amount of the claim, the factual basis for the claim, and the name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the person who may be contacted by the corporations with respect to the claim.

2. The claim may be sent to:

Vince C. Camacho
Managing Principal
Camacho Calvo Law Group
356 E. Marine Corps Drive, Suite 201
Hagåtña, Guam 96910

3. A claim against the corporations will be barred unless a processing to enforce the claim is commenced within five years after the publication of the notice.

Deloitte & Touche LLC
and
Deloitte & Touche LLP
P.O. Box 500308
Saipan, MP 96950

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 02-2023

Opening date: February 20, 2023 Closing date: March 10, 2023

Location: SAIPAN	SALARY
Position(s): (1) ARFF General Maintenance I	PL 3/1 to 3/12 ($8.01/hr. to $13.70/hr.)
(1) ARFF Mechanic II	PL 6/1 to 6/12 ($9.27/hr. to $15.85/hr.)
(1) Lease Compliance Assistant	PL 14/1 to 14/12 ($13.70/hr. to $23.42/hr.)
(1) Information Systems Specialist	PL 15/1 to 15/12 ($14.38/hr. to $24.60/hr.)

Location: PORT OF SAIPAN	SALARY
Position(s): (2) Vessel Traffic Controller	PL 4/1 to 4/12 ($8.41/hr. to $14.38/hr.)

Location: TINIAN	SALARY
Position(s): (1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance-I	PL 5/1 to 5/12 ($8.83/hr. to $15.10/hr.)
(1) Radio Operator/Weather Observer	PL 7/1 to 7/12 ($9.73/hr. to $16.65/hr.)
(1) Custodial-I	PL 1/1 to 1/12 ($7.26/hr. to $12.42/hr.)

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport no later than ***5:00 P.M. on Friday, March 10, 2023.***

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

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CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Opinion

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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A surprise trip to show US resolve

President Joe Biden was greeted by a grateful Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a surprise trip to Kyiv on Monday. In an admirable show of solidarity, Biden declared America's "unwavering commitment" to the besieged but brave Ukrainians just days before the one-year anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion.

"One year later, Kyiv stands," Biden said. "Ukraine stands. And democracy stands."

That outcome is due in no small part to the president himself, as well as bipartisan backing from most members of Congress and from the American people. They've been mostly united in aiding Ukraine in its existential fight against Russia's illegal, immoral invasion and its "crimes against humanity," as Vice President Kamala Harris rightly charged Saturday at the Munich Security Conference.

And it's due in no small part to allies—of Ukraine, but also to the U.S., as NATO nations in particular also gave military, diplomatic and political support.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken directly and correctly confronted his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Munich about the specter of China arming Russia, warning that it would have "serious" (if not explicit) consequences for U.S.-China ties.

Blinken's blunt warning and public airing of the administration's concerns about China sending weapons is likely calculated to limit Beijing's maneuverability. The administration is probably correct on the intelligence, as it was in warning the world that Russia wasn't bluffing about a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. While that didn't deter the Kremlin, the U.S. and the world can hope the tactic has better success with Beijing.

Biden recalled asking Zelenskyy how he could help on the first night of the invasion. "Gather the leaders of the world," Zelenskyy told Biden. "Ask them to support Ukraine."

Biden did precisely that—rallying allies from the free world to come to Ukraine's defense.

Which side prevails in Ukraine will determine the geopolitical order in the near term and maybe even the long term. Americans should remain stalwart, steeling their elected representatives, especially the far-right Republicans hostile to the cause. Biden should not retreat from his pledge in Kyiv to back Ukraine "for as long as it takes." And he should heed Zelenskyy's call in Munich for speed in supplying arms "because it's speed that life depends on."

It's not just Ukraine's president pressing for faster action on deciding upon and delivering weapons requests. Josep Borrell Fontelles, the top diplomat for the European Union, said in Munich that Western Europe "has finally woken up to the Russian threat and is taking it seriously."

Indeed, there's reason for guarded optimism as the war enters year two. And it's grounded in Biden's actions to date on Ukraine, which reflect the enduring bipartisan value of standing up for endangered democracies. Even in these deeply divided times, that's an objective American citizens and lawmakers can and should agree on.

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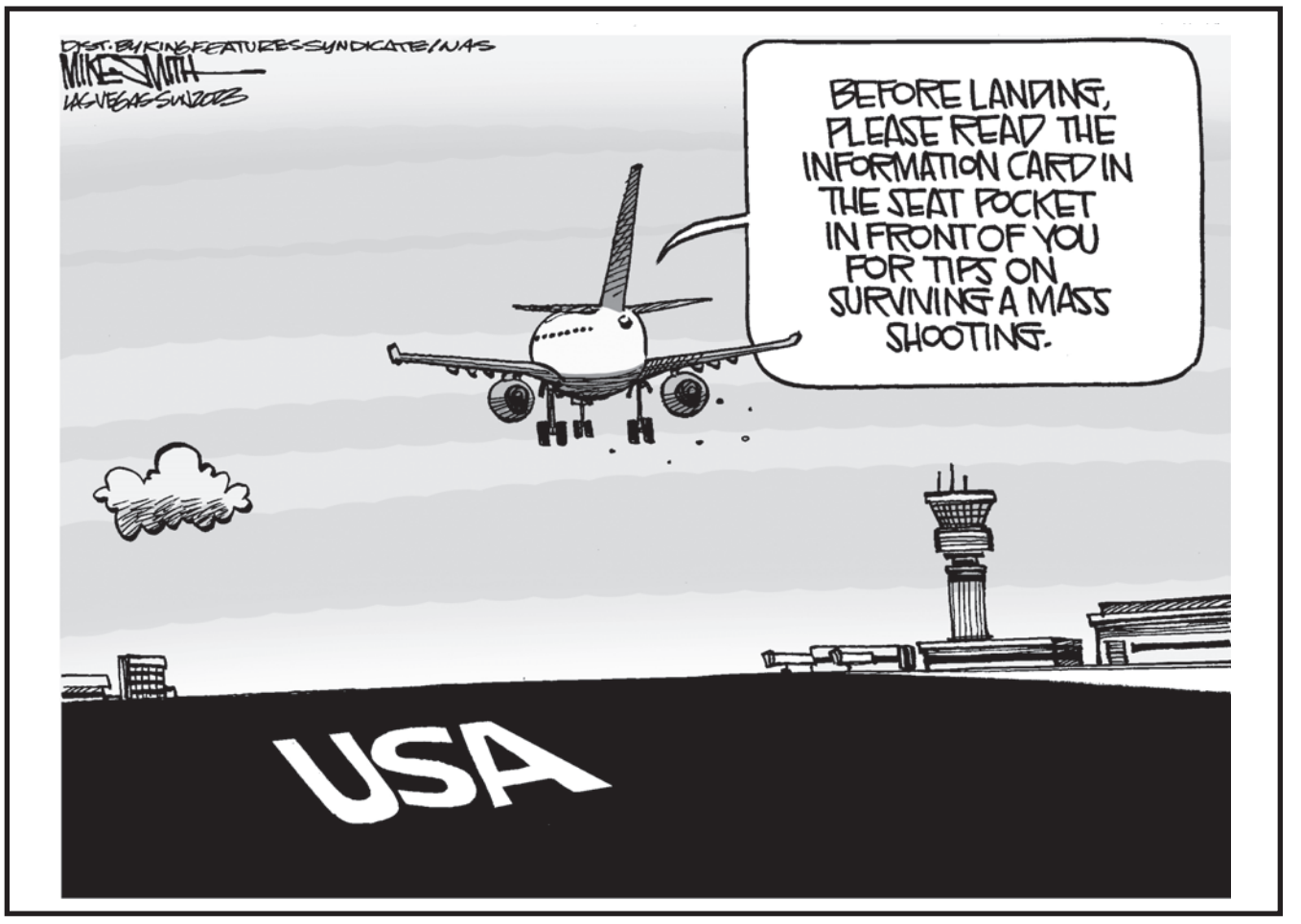
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BEFORE LANDING, PLEASE READ THE INFORMATION CARD IN THE SEAT POCKET IN FRONT OF YOU FOR TIPS ON SURVIVING A MASS SHOOTING.
USA

Education in America

By KEVIN FRAZIER
The Fulcrum

Kevin Frazier graduated from the UC Berkeley School of Law. He is currently serving as a judicial clerk in Montana. His views are his own.

The wisdom of the crowd is at the foundation of any belief that democracy can produce a good society. Elections, public forums, comment periods and the like all offer each person the chance to share their assessment of a candidate, issue, or regulation—the aggregation of those assessments determines the outcome. If we did not assume the superiority of the collective, then such a system would serve little societal value. After all, it makes little sense to shape a society around the recklessness of the rabble.

Yet, our collective wisdom is waning—at least with respect to the sort of wisdom that's required to elect quality candidates, evaluate policy and meaningfully participate. A whole slew of factors has made us individually more unaware than attentive, ignorant than informed, and foolish than deliberate with respect to our democratic duties. For example, social media surrounds us with sensationalistic accounts of all the "news" you didn't need to know.

Similarly, the political "news" we read, even from supposedly serious outlets such as The New York Times, is more akin to entertainment than analysis of the issues impacting communities around the U.S. On Jan. 30, the U.S. Politics section of The Times featured a profile on Congressman Matt Gaetz, an article on the man accused of attacking Paul Pelosi and an update on the key Senate races to watch in 2024. Absent from any of those articles: the substance of governing.

And our elected officials accelerate, rather than combat these factors—they spend hours a day making calls to major donors, posting TikToks and tweets for their most fervent and partisan supporters, and issuing press releases intended only to inflame.

Being attentive to the political news of the last weeks would mean you're well versed in George Santos' lies and have a running list of where confidential documents have been uncovered. The aggregation of this knowledge would produce little wisdom.

We need to redefine what it means to be "informed" with respect to civic education if this crowd is going to steer our democracy through tumultuous times. How best to combat and counteract the aforementioned factors is beyond the scope of a short opinion piece. Obviously, huge shifts in our business models, information diets and cultural norms are required to provide "the crowd" with information relevant to its obligation to guide society. However, even if those shifts were to occur tomorrow, until the crowd is willing and able to understand and act on that information better "news" will have little to no impact.

About 1 in 5 (19%) American adults lack functional literacy based on a 2017 study—the Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies. These adults lack the ability to "make matches between the text and information" as well as to paraphrase or make low-level inferences from that information. Additionally, they struggle to compare and contrast or reason based on provided information. Too many younger Americans similarly lack the requisite degree of literacy to contribute their full wisdom to the rest of the crowd—more 1 in 4 (27%) eighth grade students are below a basic reading level, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

All members of the crowd have valuable and necessary insights that add to our collective wisdom. However, unless and until we take the information diet and literacy of the crowd seriously, we will continue to shortchange our ability to make difficult and complex decisions. Advocates for a more representative, just, and equal democracy ought to recognize the need to become champions of literacy. Every American should feel empowered to and capable of thoroughly investigating candidates and causes—that goal will go unrealized until literacy becomes a real priority.

Empty stomachs don't make it any easier to learn to read. No defender of democratic inclusion should oppose free school lunches.

Tired teachers will struggle to keep students on pace. No proponent of the public's role should stifle initiatives to train, retain and support educators.

Short school days will shortchange the wisdom of the collective crowd. No campaigner for civic participation should limit time spent in the classroom.

The wisdom of the crowd is no secret. We reach better decisions when surrounded by other people committed to and capable of serious investigation of difficult questions. Let's invest in a wiser democracy by investing in the literacy of every American.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

'It cannot be business as usual'

Editor's Note: The following are the prepared remarks of Gov. Arnold I. Palacios at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's 2023 Economic Forum yesterday morning. The speech is also available at: https://governor.gov.mp/news/governor-arnold-i-palacios-remarks-at-the-saipan-chamber-of-commerce-2023-economic-forum/

By ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Arnold I. Palacios is the governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Hafa adai, *tiroow*, and good morning.

Thank you, Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Joe Deleon Guerrero, executive director Kim Camacho, Chamber members, and agencies who have contributed to organizing today's Economic Forum. Thank you also for providing me the opportunity to discuss the economic challenges facing the Commonwealth today, and the path ahead.

You all know the dire state of our government's fiscal affairs. It's been covered extensively in local news and social media, and I don't have to repeat it all here. When our administration took office six weeks ago, Lt. Gov. Dave Apatang and I inherited massive budget deficits, and a government and economy in deep distress.

We commend the Chamber of Commerce for taking a step in the direction of using data-informed decision-making to help chart the Commonwealth's course to economic recovery and resiliency. I look forward to hearing your recommendations and ideas.

One thing that is clear about the Commonwealth's blueprint to economic recovery and development is this: It cannot be business as usual.

The challenges we face today require the entire Commonwealth as a whole—including government agencies, legislative leaders, private sector companies, nonprofit organizations, together with our partners in the federal government—to think outside of the proverbial box. An unprecedented crisis requires an unprecedented response.

Our resilience has been tested to its limits in recent years, by devastating typhoon disasters, a global pandemic, and now a financial crisis. Catastrophic events have a way of magnifying the cracks in our systems and vulnerabilities that were there before. These cracks and vulnerabilities include poverty. Aging and neglected infrastructure. A culture of government malfeasance. Mismanagement of resources and misalignment of priorities.

Dave and I are committed to working closely and collaboratively with our partners in the private, nonprofit, and government sectors, to accelerate our way toward a thriving and sustainable economy.

And although the Commonwealth is in crisis, we cannot continue to operate only in crisis mode, with short-term thinking. We must make decisions today that are mindful of the future, driven by data and a shared vision of what a thriving and sustainable economy means for our community.

Over the last six weeks, and in the weeks to come, our administration has focused on establishing fiscal stability and accountability in our government, appointing qualified individuals to critical Cabinet positions and agencies, and shoring up relationships with federal partners and our allies in the region.

I was in our nation's capital a few days ago, speaking before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and top level federal officials at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on Insular Affairs. I explained the path we are forging to fiscal, economic, and social stability in the Commonwealth. I acknowledged the rapidly shifting geopolitical sands affecting our entire Pacific region. I emphasized the vital role the Marianas plays in the security of our nation and America's position in our region.

And I asked for help. I sought technical assistance in auditing the Commonwealth's federal and local accounts, and expanding our capacity for tax collections and enforcement. I asked for support in breaking bottlenecks in federal review processes to allow hundreds of millions of dollars in federally funded infrastructure projects to move forward. I urged for the passage of key legislative initiatives that have also been supported by this Chamber, including Congressman Kilili Sablan's H.R. 560, the Population Stabilization Act, as well as amendments to the U.S. Workforce Act to repeal the touchback provision.

Here at home, our administration has been focused on identifying ways to streamline government processes, reduce costs, and improve the service experience and responsiveness of government. We are filling vacancies on critical boards such as Zoning and [the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.], and insisting on the appointment of qualified individuals to positions of leadership and trust. We have mandated ethics training for Cabinet members and employees across the Executive Branch. In the coming days, I will be directing our regulatory agencies to track and report on turnaround times for permit reviews and decisions, and to cross-train employees so that government services aren't disrupted just because one person goes on leave.

We are also revisiting recommendations put forth during the Fiscal Response Summit held three years ago. The Chamber of Commerce played a key role in that summit, and members from the public, nonprofit, and business sectors worked together to identify creative and practical solutions to the Commonwealth's fiscal troubles, including specific ways to improve government efficiency, reduce costs, and raise revenue.

Looking ahead, we see tremendous potential in leveraging our relationships and our position in the region, to place the Commonwealth on the road to stability and prosperity.

As we pivot toward renewing and strengthening relationships with our federal partners and our allies in the region, we are pursuing opportunities to work together, government to government, to expand our reach in the Korean and Japanese tourism markets, and among military personnel and their families. The Commonwealth can be a regional hub for targeted educational programs—such as in the areas of healthcare and English language training. The Commonwealth can be a regional hub for shipping, using our Covenant and key federal policies to our advantage. And as we move closer to completion of a renewable energy feasibility study and a strategic energy plan for the Marianas in the next few months, the Commonwealth can become a leader in the region in transitioning to clean, renewable energy that will lower the cost of business and benefit all ratepayers.

We also want to make sure that the benefits of economic development are actually reaching our residents, and so we are supporting and expanding workforce development programs to include but not be limited to apprenticeships, skills training, and employment services. And because we know that small businesses are truly the backbone of a healthy local economy, I am announcing today that I am accepting nominations and letters of interest from individuals who wish to serve in a voluntary capacity on the first Governor's Small Business Advisory Council. I want to be sure that I am hearing the voices and recommendations of our small businesses on the issues and policies that affect them, and by extension the wider economy.

We have faced challenges before, many of them monumental in scale. The people of the Marianas have always risen to the task of pulling together to overcome adversity, and ultimately, to thrive. Make no mistake, the path ahead will involve much sacrifice and hardship in the short term. But we will get to a better place if we keep our eyes and our thinking focused on the long term, and make decisions now that will benefit us all in the future.

I sincerely look forward to the discussions and recommendations that come out of this Economic Forum. Thank you again for this opportunity to speak before you today.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reforms to eradicate cancers and crying foul

The truth of the matter is we need real reforms, as all of the boards and commissions are overpaid for the work they do. This is a great opportunity to begin reforming (overhauling) our government but I do want to commend the effort to try and create some kind of "pay scheme" for the casino commission, but it is like putting a Band-Aid on one cancer when the cancer has spread everywhere, as the problem is really a systemic challenge for all the boards and commissions. We have even paid casino commissioners on Tinian and Rota when there was no casino in operation and the same is becoming true for Saipan. The work we do to create a special plan for the casino commissioners would be much better served by creating "a standardized matrix that will be applicable to all the boards and commissions. I know from my experiences on the Education Board that:

1. The number of times they meet is not worth what we are paying.

2. Their lawyers, staff, and even employees do most if not all the work, while boards members and commissioners only vote.

3. The "net-value" of input from these boards cannot be quantified in any way, as they don't do the work to create reforms or changes and nor do anything tangible beyond making decisions.

It's obvious that many of our politicians seem to think the casino commissioners should be getting a lot of money because the casino generates revenues for the government while PSS board members get far less because PSS is not generating revenues but they both do the same thing—decide and vote. In fact, the casino commission was perfectly fine with the casino not paying taxes at first until the people started to complain. The casino commission has yet to come up with anything that will help the people and wouldn't even file a lawsuit for the $77 million the casino owes the people—just watching everything being sold off and this is not the first time I wrote about it so they know but refuse to listen. I guess they are waiting until there is nothing left to start thinking about the people when it's too darn late, just one darn good reason why they don't deserve special attention!

Politicians on the mainland have all kinds of think tanks, brain trusts, and even universities and foundations to help them when it comes to creating legislation but here, it's figuratively like picnic-table thinking sessions to come up with ideas (I know, as I have seen it happen). So please consider doing the work to create a standardized matrix to pay the boards and commissions that can have the flexibility to allow for some form of special compensations when it's truly deserving and even warranted. The special work that is being done for the casino commissioners can be better served by creating real reform in the way we the people pay all the boards and commissions, as these people are supposed to be about doing a public service, not getting a job, as the time they spend doesn't even qualify as a parttime job—only meeting once or twice a month!

Crying foul

I found it quite hilarious to see Sen. Cruz "crying an unnecessary foul" but he never cried foul about the casino on saipan that he voted for when he knew it would kill the Dynasty—poor Tinian, I feel so sorry for the people who are fooled by their senators. But I understand and even sympathize to some extent with the foul cry over the Indigenous Affairs Office, even though it seems like the residue of GOP politics. There are many other cultures in the CNMI now who don't get any help from the government and the same is true at the federal level except for Native Americans. They should have listened to me two decades ago when I told them to declare Chamorros and Carolinians as Native Americans and they would be getting permanent federal aid for the office—but who listens to the outsider. But just think—there are many cultures in the CNMI who have to take care of their own culture, so why can't locals take care of their culture without the government's help? I'm not against the Indigenous Affairs but we are short on cash and if you can protest against the office being closed, even though the Governor's Office has taken on the responsibilities, then you can volunteer your time to help if you truly care until there is money. I know its "taboo" for an outsider to talk about the local culture but I must tell it like it is. So, if you want to be upset, then get upset at Ralph Torres who squandered over $2 billion during his time as governor, forcing our new governor to cut costs.

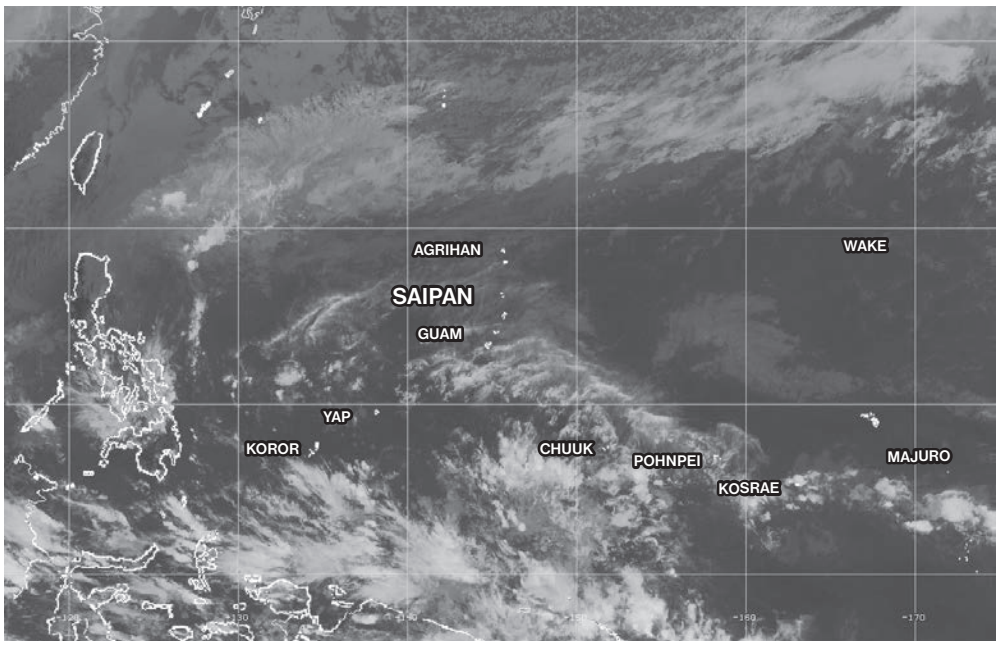
Ambrose M. Bennett
Kagman III, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Isolated showers. Mostly sunny	Isolated showers. Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
85º / 74º	85º / 74º	85º / 74º	84º / 74º	87º / 77º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 7:12 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trades prevail in the Marianas. Satellite imagery and Doppler radar indicate remnants of a shearline are bringing scattered light showers across the region. Guam buoys indicate seas are between 6 and 7 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms/Wind	86° / 77°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	83° / 75°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	83° / 78°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Showers	72° / 59°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	54° / 30°
Hong Kong	Sunny	70° / 62°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	80° / 72°
London	Cloudy	47° / 33°
Los Angeles	Mostly Cloudy	56° / 41°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	89° / 76°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 68°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	82° / 73°
New York	Rain	44° / 40°
Osaka	Cloudy	51° / 42°
Paris	Cloudy	54° / 41°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	56° / 41°
Rome	Cloudy	62° / 45°
Salem	Cloudy	79° / 67°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy/Wind	49° / 40°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	48° / 30°
Tokyo	Showers	55° / 42°
Washington, DC	Rain	51° / 47°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	6:23 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	6:23 PM
Sunday	6:36 AM	6:23 PM
Monday	6:35 AM	6:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:47 AM	9:18 PM	-
Friday	9:27 AM	10:13 PM	-
Saturday	10:07 AM	11:07 PM	-
Sunday	10:49 AM	-	-
Monday	-	12:02 AM	11:34 AM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
3:51 AM	Low Tide	-0.10
10:06 AM	High Tide	1.88
4:28 PM	Low Tide	0.40
10:03 PM	High Tide	1.74

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:30AM	7:25AM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	8:00PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau
OZ624/701	3:50PM	10:35AM+1	3,6 via Incheon

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	6:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
TW9308	3:50AM	7:20AM	1, 4, 5, 7
OZ624	3:50PM	7:40PM	3, 6
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:46AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA189	12:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	12:40AM	8:46AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:46AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:46AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
OZ704/623	11:50PM	2:20PM+1	2, 5 via Incheon

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ623	9:00AM	2:20PM	3, 6
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:45PM	2:15AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
TW9307	9:20PM	2:50AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS

INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 13, 2023

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
11:20 A.M.	11:38 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:40 P.M.	3:58 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:40 A.M.	9:58 A.M.	6,7

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	12:18 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:20 P.M.	4:38 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
10:20 A.M.	10:38 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
7:20 A.M.	8:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:00 P.M.	5:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:40 A.M.	8:20 A.M.	6,7

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
10:20 A.M.	11:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
6:00 P.M.	6:40 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
8:40 A.M.	9:20 A.M.	6,7

SAIPAN TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
12:00 P.M.	1:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2:00 P.M.	3:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
7:00 P.M.	8:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
11:00 A.M.	12:00 P.M.	6,7

GUAM TO SAIPAN

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1:30 P.M.	2:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5:30 P.M.	6:30 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9:00 P.M.	10:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
12:30 P.M.	1:30 P.M.	6,7

ROTA TO GUAM

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
8:20 A.M.	8:55 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4:25 P.M.	5:00 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

GUAM TO ROTA

DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
9:25 A.M.	10:00 A.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
3:30 P.M.	4:05 P.M.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

MARPAC celebrates 50th with launch party

Icy beer and fresh gear were given out during Marianas Pacific Distributors Inc. or MARPAC's 50th anniversary happy hour and launch party at the Jonny's Bar & Grill Monday night.

The first 50 customers were gifted with MARPAC gear such as Bud hats and T-shirts as well as a raffle ticket for a chance to win prizes throughout the night, and were also welcomed with music from The High-Tide Band, promotions on Bud family buckets of 5, and food.

According to MARPAC sales manager James Lee, this Friday is the start of their 14-week promotion—Budweiser $50,000 giveaway, in which a purchase of a 12-pack of Budweiser, Bud Light, or Michelob Ultra will qualify those to win prizes totaling $50,000, including 50,000 United Miles, $500 worth of gas, shopping sprees, and more.

After purchase, sign the raffle entry form, drop it in the drop box, and wait for the call. Customers can find more information on Instagram by following @currentcnmi.

There will be additional promotions later on in the year on MARPAC consumer products and their wine and spirits, as well.

What you can also find in a store near you right now are MARPAC's two new beverages to try—Cutwater Vodka Mule and Cutwater Mint & Lime Rum Mojito—both of which are perfect for those hot beach days or barbeque parties with family and friends.

You don't need to bring all those bottles of alcohol to make your mixed drink as it's already pre-made and ready for you to guzzle down on those days you just want to relax.

MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney, who was at the celebration, said that the past years of business despite the pandemic has been great.

"It's been great but it's been hard at times as well. But we persevere. We're able to get through all the trials, the tribulations, and all the challenges, but we remain steadfast. We want to be here for 50 more years. We want to continue serving the CNMI and continue to be a great community partner as well.

Pudney then thanked the community for their support over the past 50 years.

"I would like to thank all of our customers and all of our supporters that have stuck by us. All the sports organizations and nonprofits that we continuously help and donate to, I want to thank all of them for standing by us. We want to be here for them for the next 50 years and beyond. So, thank you for your patronage and for supporting us."

MARPAC was established in 1973 and has sponsored many sporting events and has donated to many nonprofits and organizations throughout the CNMI.

MARPAC is a responsible and upstanding family-owned business, built on a foundation of service. Our mission is to provide the best products to our customers, and be a local partner helping to bring communities together, as well as supporting their growth to excellence. From our family to yours—MARPAC is committed to serving the people of the CNMI, now, and for generations to come.

LEIGH GASES

MARPAC's new alcoholic beverages found at stores near you include the Cutwater Vodka Mule, which is vodka with ginger beer and lime flavor, and Cutwater Rum Mojito, which is mint and lime flavored.

LEIGH GASES

MARPAC resident manager Guy Pudney, right, poses with sales manager James Lee, left, along with staff handing out Bud shirts and hats during their 50th anniversary happy hour and launch party at the Jonny's Bar & Grill Monday night.

LEIGH GASES

The first 50 customers who made their way to MARPAC's 50th anniversary happy hour and launch party at the Jonny's Bar & Grill Monday night were greeted with Bud gear and beer.

United Airlines announces '23 Japan and Guam Summer flight schedules

GUAM—United Airlines announced its 2023 Japan and Guam summer flight schedule, effective March 26, 2023. United will significantly increase its flights on all routes between Guam (GUM) and Japan—Narita/Tokyo (NRT), Chubu/Nagoya (NGO), Kansai/Osaka (KIX), and Fukuoka (FUK)—to a total of 56 flights a week. In particular, United continues to strengthen the Narita-Guam route and will increase its flights from 18 to 25 flights per week and plans to operate up to four daily flights to meet strong passenger demand.

"The summer travel demand from Japan to Guam is looking promising right now, which is positive news for the island," said Sam Shinohara, United's managing director of Airport Operations, Asia-Pacific. "Looking back to the start of the pandemic when tourism came to a halt, we continued to fly our Guam routes with the commitment of supporting the local community as well as the return of tourism to the region. With the new summer schedule, we are another step closer to our goal of restoring a full Guam-Japan schedule."

The Japan to Guam/Saipan summer flight schedule, which becomes effective on March 26, 2023, is listed below:

Guam/ Saipan routes	Flight No.	Flight schedule (Eff. Mar. 26)
NRT-GUM	UA827/UA873	Daily
NRT-GUM	UA197/UA196	Daily
NRT-GUM	UA865/UA864	Daily (eff. April 9)
NRT-GUM	UA874/UA828	Four-times-weekly
NRT-SPN (Saipan)	UA825/UA824	Three-times-weekly
NGO-GUM	UA136/UA137	Daily
NGO-GUM	UA172/UA171	Daily
KIX-GUM	UA150/UA151	Daily
KIX-GUM	UA177/UA178	Three-times-weekly
FUK-GUM	UA166/UA165	Daily

Shinohara added, "United will be celebrating 55 years as Guam's hometown airline in 2023, and we understand how increasing capacity between Japan and Guam is vital to Guam's tourism industry. I thank our Japan team for continuing to promote Guam as a top destination for Japanese travelers and our tourism stakeholders in Guam for working together for the benefit of the island."

Japan's flight capacity significantly expands in time for summer travel

As travel to and from Japan continues to increase, United also announced that Japan will launch two new trans-Pacific flights and increase frequency to a total of 10 daily flights, significantly expanding connectivity options for customers through 70 weekly flights.

"Capacity increases in Japan benefit our customers throughout Asia-Pacific by providing more convenient flight options to connect. This will mean fewer stops to make and shorter travel times overall," said Shinohara.

Japan is United's largest station in Asia that provides connections from three of Japan's major airports on 10 routes to the U.S: four routes from Narita/Tokyo (NRT), one from Kansai/Osaka (KIX), and five from Haneda/Tokyo (HND).

The Japan trans-Pacific flight schedule, also effective on March 26, 2023, is listed below:

Trans-Pacific routes	Flight No.	Flight schedule (Eff. Mar. 26 eastbound)
NRT- SFO (San Francisco)	UA838/UA837	Daily
NRT-EWR (Newark)	UA78/UA79	Daily
NRT-DEN (Denver)	UA142/UA143	Daily
NRT-IAH (Houston)	UA6/UA7	Daily
HND-ORD (Chicago)	UA882/UA881	Daily
HND-SFO (San Francisco)	UA876/UA875	Daily
HND-EWR (Newark)	UA130/UA131	Daily
HND-LAX (Los Angeles)	UA38/UA39	Daily (new)
HND-IAD (Washington D.C.)	UA804/UA803	Daily (new)
KIX-SFO (San Francisco)	UA34/UA35	Three times weekly (Daily eff. Apr. 24,

Due to ongoing travel restrictions, flight schedules are subject to change without advance notice. Customers are encouraged to visitunited.com to check the latest flight schedules and book flights through the United website or app, local travel agents, or United's City Ticket Office in Tiyan.

United reminds customers that Early Check-in service is available for all Guam travelers who are leaving on early morning flights. Passengers can check in the night before their flights to avoid long lines at the airport. Early Check-in service is offered daily from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at the United counter at the A. B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB23-CHCC/MICAH-007
MATERNAL, INFANT, CHILD AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH (MICAH) PROGRAM
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 24, 2023 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)
"LEASE OF VEHICLES"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC.HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP23-DCCA/CCDF-42300042
SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 16, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"For the full implementation of the CNMI's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) Reach Higher, CNMI, and related activities"

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THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ MARIBEL D. LOSTE, M.A.
DIRECTOR OF CCDF

/S/ GERALDINE T. CRUZ
ACTING DIRECTOR, P.S.

Nation

Biden to meet eastern flank NATO leaders amid Russia worries

WARSAW (AP)—President Joe Biden is wrapping up his whirlwind, four-day visit to Poland and Ukraine by reassuring eastern flank NATO allies that his administration is highly attuned to the looming threats and other impacts spurred by the grinding Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Before departing Warsaw on Wednesday, Biden will hold talks with leaders from the Bucharest Nine, a collection of nations on the most eastern parts of the NATO alliance that came together in response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

As the war in Ukraine drags on, the Bucharest Nine countries' anxieties have remained heightened. Many worry Putin could move to take military action against them next if he's successful in Ukraine. The alliance includes Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

"When Russia invaded, it wasn't just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a test for the ages," Biden said in an address from the foot of Warsaw's Royal Castle on Tuesday to mark the somber milestone of the year-old Russian invasion. "Europe was being tested. America was being tested. NATO was being tested. All democracies were being tested."

Biden met Tuesday in Warsaw with Moldovan President Maia Sandu, who last week claimed Moscow was behind a plot to overthrow her country's government using external saboteurs.

Sandwiched between Ukraine and Romania and one of Europe's poorest countries, the Eastern European nation has had historic ties to Russia but wants to join the 27-nation European Union. Biden in his remarks endorsed Moldova's bid to join the EU

"I'm proud to stand with you and the freedom-loving people of Moldova," Biden said of Sandu and her country in his Tuesday address.

AP

President Joe Biden smiles after his speech at the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland, Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine nearly a year ago, Moldova, a former Soviet republic of about 2.6 million people, has sought to forge closer ties with its Western partners. Last June, it was granted EU candidate status, the same day as Ukraine.

Sandu spoke out last week about a Russian plot "to overthrow the constitutional order." She spoke out after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said his country had intercepted plans by Russian secret services to destroy Moldova. Those claims were later confirmed by Moldovan intelligence officials.

Biden's speech on the Ukraine war came one day after he made a surprise visit to Kyiv, a grand gesture of solidarity with the Ukraine. The address was part affirmation of Europe's role in helping Ukraine repel Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and part sharply worded warning to Putin that the U.S. won't abide Moscow defeating Ukraine.

The White House has praised several eastern flank countries, including Lithuania, Poland and Romania, over the last year for stepping up efforts to back Ukraine with weapons and economic aid and taking in refugees.

Biden has given particular attention to Poland's efforts. The country is hosting about 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees and has committed $3.8 billion in military and economic assistance to Kyiv.

"The truth of the matter is: The United States needs Poland and NATO as much as NATO needs the United States," Biden said during talks with Duda on Wednesday.

US to limit asylum to migrants who pass through a 3rd nation

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration said Tuesday that it will generally deny asylum to migrants who show up at the U.S. southern border without first seeking protection in a country they passed through, mirroring an attempt by the Trump administration that never took effect because it was blocked in court.

The measure, while stopping short of a total ban, imposes severe limitations on asylum for any nationality except Mexicans, who don't have to travel through a third country to reach the U.S.

The measure is almost certain to face legal challenges. President Donald Trump pursued a similar ban in 2019 but a federal appeals court prevented it from taking effect.

The Biden administration rule proposed Tuesday has to first go through a 30-day public comment period before it can be formally adopted. If adopted it would remain in place for two years.

Administration officials expect the rule will take effect when a pandemic-era rule that denies asylum on grounds of preventing the spread of COVID-19 ends. That rule, known as Title 42 authority, is set to expire May 11 but has been delayed twice by legal challenges from Republican-led states.

The Homeland Security and Justice Departments argued that surging numbers of migrants left them little choice. They anticipate illegal crossings to climb to between 11,000 and 13,000 a day if no action is taken after Title 42 ends; that's even higher than the 8,600 daily crossings in mid-December as anticipation spread among migrants and smugglers that Title 42 was about to end. At the last minute the Supreme Court kept it in place.

The proposed rule establishes "a rebuttable presumption of asylum ineligibility" for anyone who passes through another country to reach the U.S. border with Mexico without first seeking protection there, according to a notice in the Federal Register. Exceptions will be made for people with an "acute medical emergency," "imminent and extreme threat" of violent crimes such as murder, rape or kidnapping, being a victim of human trafficking or "other extremely compelling circumstances." Children traveling alone will also be exempted, according to the rule.

The rule largely calls on prospective migrants to follow legal pathways to apply for asylum such as using the CBP One app, through which prospective migrants can schedule an appointment to apply to appear at a border entry point to apply for asylum. The administration portrayed these efforts as a way to protect migrants from the dangerous journeys as they travel north to the U.S. and allow the U.S. border entry points to manage the migrant flows in a "safe and efficient manner." But critics have said the app has been beset by technical problems and its not clear how many appointments are available every day.

U.S. officials insist the measure proposed Tuesday is different from Trump's, largely because there is room for exemptions and because the Biden administration has made other legal pathways available, particularly humanitarian parole for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, Venezuelans and Ukrainians.

"We are a nation of immigrants, and we are a nation of laws. We are strengthening the availability of legal, orderly pathways for migrants to come to the United States, at the same time proposing new consequences on those who fail to use processes made available to them by the United States and its regional partners," said Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

The rule was first mentioned in early January as part of a wider announcement by the administration to let in 30,000 migrants a month from four countries—Haiti, Venezuela, Cuba and Nicaragua—provided they apply to come to the U.S. and don't just arrive at the border. In the ensuing weeks, the administration said migrant encounters from those countries plummeted, and they've hailed it as a model for dealing with immigration.

But immigration advocates have criticized attempts to limit asylum applications at the southern border, saying some migrants can't wait in their home country and noting that other countries don't have the same asylum protections as the U.S.

Four Democratic senators —Bob Menendez and Cory Booker of New Jersey, Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico and Alex Padilla of California —said they were "deeply disappointed" the administration was moving forward with the rule and urged it to reconsider.

"We have an obligation to protect vulnerable migrants under domestic and international law and should not leave vulnerable migrants stranded in countries unable to protect them," the senators' statement read.

Anu Joshi of the American Civil Liberties Union, which litigated many of the challenges to Trump's immigration restrictions, sharply criticized the rule, saying it was simply revisiting Trump's asylum ban.

The new rule comes as President Joe Biden is facing a Republican-controlled House determined to make immigration a key issue as they attempt to portray the southern border as out of control.

Malcolm X's daughter to sue CIA, NYPD and FBI for wrongful death

NEW YORK (AP)—The family of slain civil rights leader Malcolm X marked on Tuesday the anniversary of his 1965 assassination by announcing plans to sue agencies including the CIA, FBI, the New York Police Department and others for $100 million, accusing them of playing a role in his death.

Two of his daughters, Ilyasah Shabazz and Qubilah Shabazz, were joined by attorney Ben Crump at a news conference at the site of the former Audubon Ballroom in upper Manhattan, where Malcolm X was fatally shot as a crowd gathered to hear him speak on Feb. 21, 1965.

For decades questions have circulated over who was responsible for his death.

Three men were convicted, but two were exonerated in 2021 after a renewed investigation into the cases against them showed the evidence used to gain convictions was shaky and that authorities had held back some information.

Ilyasah Shabazz, the co-administrator of her father's estate, filed notices of claim, which is the first step in the process, saying that the agencies "conspired with each other and with other individuals and acted, and failed to act, in such a way as to bring about the wrongful death of Malcolm X."

"For years our family has fought for the truth to come to light," she said at the news conference. "We want justice served for our father."

Emails seeking comment were sent to the CIA, FBI, Department of Justice and New York City's legal department. The DOJ and NYPD declined to comment.

Crump noted the anniversary date and said that ever since then, "there has been speculation as to who was involved in the assassination of Malcolm X."

He cited the 2021 exonerations and said that government agencies including the Manhattan district attorney, the NYPD and the FBI "had factual evidence, exculpatory evidence that they fraudulently concealed from the men who were wrongfully convicted for the assassination of Malcolm X."

Asked if he believes government agencies conspired to assassinate Malcolm, Crump said, "That is what we are alleging, yes. They infiltrated many civil rights organizations."

Asia

Fears and questions about North Korea's growing nuclear arsenal

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea's latest missile launches are a demonstration of the country's avowed ability to use nuclear force against South Korea and the mainland U.S. How immediate is that threat?

North Korea claims its nuclear forces are capable of destroying its rivals, and often follows its provocative weapons tests with launch details. But many foreign experts call the North's claims propaganda and suggest that the country is not yet capable of hitting the United States or its allies with a nuclear weapon.

There's no question that North Korea has nuclear bombs, and that it has missiles that place the U.S. mainland, South Korea and Japan within striking distance. What's not yet clear is whether the country has mastered the tricky engineering required to join the bombs and the missiles.

ICBMs

North Korea has demonstrated that it has missiles that could fly far enough to reach deep into the continental U.S., but it's not clear whether they can survive reentering the Earth's atmosphere on arrival.

North Korea said it launched a Hwasong-15 intercontinental ballistic missile on Saturday to verify the weapon's reliability and the combat readiness of the country's nuclear forces. It's one of three kinds of ICBMs the country has developed, along with the Hwasong-14 and Hwasong-17. All three are liquid-fueled, and North Korea has portrayed them all as nuclear-capable.

Launched almost straight up to avoid the territories of neighbors, the weapon reached a maximum altitude of about 5,770 kilometers (3,585 miles) and flew 990 kilometers (615 miles), according to North Korean state media. The reported flight details suggest the missile could travel 13,000 kilometers (8,080 miles) or beyond if launched on a normal trajectory.

"These days, North Korea has been disclosing information about its launches in a very detailed manner to try to let others believe what they've done is genuine," analyst Shin Jong-woo at South Korea's Defense and Security Forum said. "But I think that's part of their propaganda."

There are questions on whether North Korea has acquired the technology to shield warheads from the high-temperature, high-stress environment of atmospheric reentry.

A South Korean biennial defense document released last week said it's not clear whether the missiles can survive reentry, because all of North Korea's ICBM tests have so far been made on high angles.

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said a normal trajectory would cause greater stress, as a warhead would spend a longer time passing through altitudes with high air density.

North Korean state media said the launch was made "suddenly" after a surprise order from leader Kim Jong Un.

"The Kim regime's claims of short-notice launches are thus intended to demonstrate not only the development of strategic and tactical nuclear forces but also the operational capability to use them," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said.

In a military parade earlier this month, North Korea showcased around a dozen ICBMs, an unprecedented number that suggested progress in its efforts to mass-produce powerful weapons.

Among them were huge canister-sealed missiles that experts say were likely a version of a solid-fuel ICBM that North Korea has been trying to develop in recent years. Solid-fueled systems allow missiles to be mobile on the ground and make them faster to launch.

WARHEADS

North Korea likely has dozens of nuclear warheads. The question is whether they are small enough to fit on a missile.

North Korea has so far performed six underground nuclear test explosions to manufacture warheads that it can place on missiles. Outside estimates of the number of North Korean nuclear warheads vary widely, ranging from 20-60 to up to about 115.

In a 2021 interview with 38 North, a North Korea-focused website, renowned nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker, who has visited North Korea's main Yongbyon nuclear complex numerous times, said that "20 to 60 is possible, with the most likely number being 45."

Some experts argue that North Korea has likely already built miniaturized nuclear warheads to be mounted on missiles, citing the number of years the country has spent on its nuclear and missile programs. But others say North Korea is still years away from producing such warheads.

"After its sixth nuclear test, people accepted that North Korea really will have nuclear weapons. But they are still debating whether it has warhead miniaturization technology," Shin, the analyst, said.

The North described its sixth nuclear test in 2017 as a detonation of a thermonuclear bomb built for ICBMs. It created a tremor that measured magnitude 6.3, and some studies put its estimated explosive yield at about 50 to 140 kilotons of TNT. In comparison, the pair of atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II—which killed a total of more than 210,000 people— yielded explosions equivalent to about 15 and 20 kilotons of TNT, respectively.

The biennial South Korean defense document said North Korea is estimated to have 70 kilograms (154 pounds) of weapons-grade plutonium. Some observers say that's enough for about 9-18 bombs. The document estimated that North Korea has "a considerable amount of" highly enriched uranium as well.

SHORT-RANGE WEAPONS

Following the collapse of diplomacy with then-U.S. President Donald Trump in 2019, Kim sped up the development of short-range solid-fuel, nuclear-capable missiles designed to strike key targets in South Korea, including U.S. military bases there.

The so-called "tactical" nuclear weapons include what North Korea calls "super-large" 600-millimeter multiple rocket launchers that it tested Monday. South Korea describes the weapon as a short-range missile system.

North Korean state media said its new artillery system can carry nuclear warheads, and that four rockets would be enough to wipe out an enemy airfield. The statement drew quick outside doubts about whether the weapons are indeed nuclear-capable.

"The North Korean claim doesn't make sense to some extent. ... Why do they need four tactical nuclear weapons to destroy just one airfield?" Shin, the analyst, said. "Also, which country would disclose such attack scenarios via state media?"

World

Putin raises tension on Ukraine, suspends START nuclear pact

AP

Russian President Vladimir Putin gives his annual state of the nation address in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023.

MOSCOW (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin suspended Moscow's participation in the last remaining nuclear arms control pact with the United States, announcing the move Tuesday in a bitter speech in which he made clear he would not change his strategy in the war in Ukraine.

Putin emphasized, however, that Russia isn't withdrawing from the pact yet, and hours after his address the Foreign Ministry said Moscow would respect the treaty's caps on nuclear weapons. It also said Russia would continue to exchange information about test launches of ballistic missiles per earlier agreements with the United States.

In his long-delayed state-of-the-nation address, Putin cast his country — and Ukraine — as victims of Western double-dealing and said it was Russia, not Ukraine, fighting for its very existence.

"We aren't fighting the Ukrainian people," Putin said ahead of the war's first anniversary Friday. "The Ukrainian people have become hostages of the Kyiv regime and its Western masters, which have effectively occupied the country."

The speech reiterated a litany of grievances he has frequently offered as justification for the widely condemned military campaign, while vowing no military letup.

Along with limits on the number of nuclear weapons, the 2010 New START envisages broad inspections of nuclear sites. Putin said Russia should stand ready to resume nuclear weapons tests if the U.S. does so, a move that would end a global ban on such tests in place since the Cold War era.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres responded by calling for Russia and the United States to return to dialogue immediately because "a world without nuclear arms control is a far more dangerous and unstable one."

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken described Moscow's decision to suspend participation in the treaty as "really unfortunate and very irresponsible."

"We'll be watching carefully to see what Russia actually does," he said while visiting Greece.

China's U.N. Ambassador Zhang Jun called on the U.S. and Russia to "continue to negotiate with each other in finding a good solution."

New quake brings fresh losses to residents of Turkey, Syria

ISTANBUL (AP)—Survivors of the earthquake that jolted Turkey and Syria 15 days ago, killing tens of thousands of people and leaving hundreds of thousands of others homeless, dealt with more trauma and loss Tuesday after another deadly quake and aftershocks rocked the region.

The 6.4 magnitude earthquake that struck Monday evening had its epicenter in the Defne district of Turkey's Hatay province, which was of the area's worst affected by the Feb. 6 magnitude 7.8 quake that killed nearly 46,000 people in the two countries.

Turkey's disaster management authority, AFAD, said the new quake killed six people and injured 294 others, including 18 who were in critical condition. In Syria, a woman and a girl died as a result of panic during the earthquake in the provinces of Hama and Tartus, pro-government media said.

Monday's quake was felt in Jordan, Cyprus, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt. A magnitude 5.8 quake followed, along with dozens of aftershocks. The White Helmets, northwest Syria's civil defense organization, said about 190 people suffered injuries in rebel-held areas and that several flimsy buildings collapsed but there were no reports of anyone trapped under the debris.

In Turkey, teacher Zuher Capar, 42, said he was mourning the loss of relatives in the original earthquake and having a meal with his aunt and uncle near the Hatay town of Samandag when they felt Monday's temblor.

"It shook a little, then it grew strong," he said. "The electricity went and there were screams everywhere. There were small children in the house. They were screaming, my aunt was crying."

On Feb. 6, Capar rushed to try to help his cousin, the cousin's wife and the couple's small children out of the rubble of their collapsed home, but they did not survive.

"We had barely overcome the sadness (from the first earthquake)," he said.

Environment

Prolonged low tides see smaller canals dry up in Venice

VENICE, Italy (AP)—Some of Venice's smaller canals have practically dried up due a prolonged spell of low tides, frustrating boat crews and bewildering tourists.

The prolonged stretch of ebb tides is linked to a lingering high-pressure weather system over much of Italy, experts say.

Since the canals essentially serve as streets in car-less Venice, the phenomenon of the last days has added to the challenges of every-day life in the lagoon city. Ambulance boats in some cases have had to tie up farther from their destination, forcing medical crews to sometimes hand carry stretchers over long distances since their vessels can't progress up canals reduced to a trickle of water and muck.

For tourists, it meant gondolas couldn't navigate some secondary waterways that run under Venice's many picturesque bridges.

In mid-winter, high atmospheric pressure combined with the lunar cycle produces the ultra-low water levels during ebb tide, noted Jane Da Mosto, an environmental scientist and sustainable development analyst with We Are Here Venice, an environmental advocacy group.

She added that the phenomenon highlights lack of attention to the overdue need for cleaning Venice's inner canal network.

Navigation continued on the wider, main waterways, including the Grand and Giudecca canals.

Separately, the same high pressure system compounded by scarce Alpine snow melt this year has been a factor for the shriveling of lakes and rivers in northern Italy in recent weeks. This month, an isthmus linking the shores of Lake Garda to a small island has re-emerged, delighting visitors who were able to, in effect, walk part-way across the middle of the lake.

Si Yu'us Ma'ase
ginen i familian

†Vincent Mendiola Calvo

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to our families and friends for your unending love, support, and time you have given us in our time of grief and profound sorrow.

Your words of compassion, generosity, kindness, and most especially prayers have eased our pain and continue to give us comfort, strength, and peace.

Your stories, memories, and pictures shared with us, since his untimely passing, reflect how his big heart and lively spirit was far-reaching and how much he will be missed.

We ask that you continue to honor his memory by sharing the beauty and potential of our islands, staying connected with each other, and loving God and one another, as he did.

We are truly grateful for your presence during the daily masses on Rota, Saipan, & Guam, the daily rosaries held in person & virtually by our Salem, Oregon families, the welcoming of him back to his beautiful island of Luta, and for being with us to celebrate his eternal life.

May God continue to hold each of you in His great love.

Salomae "Mae" Hocog Calvo & Family

Austrian kids take government to court over climate change

BERLIN (AP)—A dozen minors filed a lawsuit with Austria's top court Tuesday seeking to force the government to ensure their constitutional rights are protected by taking tougher action against climate change.

A lawyer for the group said the case submitted to the Constitutional Court is modeled on a similar lawsuit in Germany that prompted the government there to set new targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions two years ago.

Their lawyer Michaela Kroemer says Austria's climate law from 2011 doesn't sufficiently protect the plaintiffs, aged five to 16, from the life-threatening consequences of global warming. Specifically, she said the children's right to "generational justice"—guaranteed in the Austrian constitution—is breached by the Alpine nation's climate law.

Kroemer said the lawsuit is backed by the youth climate group Fridays for Future—which was inspired by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg—and financially supported through philanthropic donations.

UN treaty talks resume to save biodiversity

By CHRISTINA LARSON
AP SCIENCE WRITER

United Nations members gather Monday in New York to resume efforts to forge a long-awaited and elusive treaty to safeguard the world's marine biodiversity.

Nearly two-thirds of the ocean lies outside national boundaries on the high seas where fragmented and unevenly enforced rules seek to minimize human impacts.

The goal of the U.N. meetings, running through March 3, is to produce a unified agreement for the conservation and sustainable use of those vast marine ecosystems. The talks, formally called the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, resume negotiations suspended last fall without agreement on a final treaty.

"The ocean is the life support system of our planet," said Boris Worm, a marine biologist at Canada's Dalhousie University. "For the longest time, we did not feel we had a large impact on the high seas. But that notion has changed with expansion of deep sea fishing, mining, plastic pollution, climate change," and other human disturbances, he said.

The U.N. talks will focus on key questions, including: How should the boundaries of marine protected areas be drawn, and by whom? How should institutions assess the environmental impacts of commercial activities, such as shipping and mining? And who has the power to enforce rules?

"This is our largest global commons," said Nichola Clark, an oceans expert who follows the negotiations for the nonpartisan Pew Research Center in Washington, D.C. "We are optimistic that this upcoming round of negotiations will be the one to get a treaty over the finish line."

The aim of the talks is not to actually designate marine protected areas, but to establish a mechanism for doing so. "The goal is to set up a new body that would accept submissions for specific marine protected areas," Clark said.

Marine biologist Simon Ingram at the University of Plymouth in England says there's an urgent need for an accord. "It's a really pressing time for this—especially when you have things like deep-sea mining that could be a real threat to biodiversity before we've even been able to survey and understand what lives on the ocean floor," Ingram said.

Experts say that a global oceans treaty is needed to actually enforce the U.N. Biodiversity Conference's recent pledge to protect 30% of the planet's oceans, as well as its land, for conservation.

"We need a legally binding framework that can enable countries to work together to actually achieve these goals they've agreed to," said Jessica Battle, an expert on oceans governance at World Wide Fund for Nature

Life & Style

In unlikely wartime role, Zelenskyy gives Ukrainians hope

AP

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stands with soldiers after attending a national flag-raising ceremony in the freed Izium, Ukraine, Wednesday, Sept. 14, 2022.

WASHINGTON (AP)—A year ago, with Russian forces bearing down on Ukraine's capital, Western leaders feared for the life of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and advised him to flee. The U.S. offered him an escape route.

Instead, he filmed a defiant video of himself on a darkened street outside the presidential offices with his four closest aides arrayed behind him. "We are all here," Zelenskyy said in a declaration of their determination to stay in Kyiv and defend Ukraine's independence.

It was powerful political theater. From the first days of the war, when few expected Ukraine's army to hold up against a Russian onslaught, Zelenskyy has inspired Ukrainians to fight. He has given them hope.

Night after night, he has addressed the nation in a video posted on social media. His actor-trained voice can be soothing or forceful, rising in moral outrage as he condemns the most recent Russian atrocities and insists that those responsible will be punished.

He speaks of the anger and pain from the devastation of the country and the untold deaths. He vows that Ukraine will one day be made whole. He never tires of thanking all those on the front lines. Through all the horrors of the war, Zelenskyy has instilled a belief that Ukraine can prevail.

Zelenskyy was just 41 when he was elected president in 2019, largely on the promise that he would be the kind of corruption-fighting president he had played so well in a popular television show. In those first years, he struggled to convince Ukrainians he was up to the job and his approval ratings slumped.

War can take leaders and make them heroes or fools. Moscow's struggles in Ukraine have done nothing to elevate Russian President Vladimir Putin in the eyes of the world. But it was as a wartime leader that Zelenskyy found his moment. Many now compare him to Winston Churchill, the British prime minister who famously led his country in World War II as it came under attack from Nazi Germany.

"He's been extraordinarily good at channeling a kind of larger national spirit," Fiona Hill, a Russia scholar at the Brookings Institution who served in the past three U.S. administrations, said in an interview with The Associated Press. She credits, in part, Zelenskyy's training as an actor. "Sometimes, it's literally when we say this is the role of a lifetime, there is that performative element of it."

Hill notes that Churchill "wasn't this great a leader in peacetime as he was in the war, and he himself was a performer and he enjoyed amateur theatricals and also knew that he was playing a role."

As a wartime leader, Zelenskyy almost immediately began to dress the part, shedding his trim suits for an entire wardrobe of army green. His boyish face grew a dark beard. He seemed to age overnight.

Before the invasion, he looked much like the affable young history teacher from his TV show, "Servant of the People," about a man who was improbably elected president after a student surreptitiously filmed his profanity-filled rant against government corruption. The comedy show, which ran from 2015 until the real election in spring 2019, was hugely popular.

Divorced couple's finances have changed since parting

DEAR ABBY: I divorced my husband of 12 years. We were together for 16. We had a 4-year-old at the time we separated. To avoid possible loss of the 401(k) or to have to pay him alimony, I didn't ask him for child support. I knew he wasn't able to afford it at the time. He has since gotten a good job but hasn't offered to financially support his daughter. My new fiance has no respect for him because of this.

I have let it go to keep the peace so we can co-parent and my now-9-year-old daughter won't have to see what is going on. This is becoming a problem on holidays because we've always celebrated with her together. She has grown to love that we do this for her. However, my fiance doesn't want to be a part of those special moments. He doesn't think my daughter would mind, and he doesn't want to risk losing his cool in front of her.

This is putting a strain on our relationship. Is it wrong of me to want him to fake it so we can all get along? Or is he wrong to make other plans to avoid these situations?

FOR HER SAKE IN GEORGIA

DEAR FOR HER SAKE: Because your ex-husband's employment circumstances have improved since the divorce, have a calm, adult conversation with him. Many exes would not have been as understanding as you have been. Because he can now afford it, he should share in the cost of raising his daughter. If you can reach an agreement, have an attorney draw up a document in writing. However, if he isn't willing to step up, contact a lawyer who specializes in family law to discuss what your next steps should be.

Also, with your new engagement, YOUR personal circumstances have changed. Your fiance should not be compelled to interact with your ex if it makes him uncomfortable.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: My husband passed away a year ago from a long ordeal with Alzheimer's. Before he died, I invited my soon-to-be retired sister to come live with me. We had been close throughout our lives, and I thought it would be good for both of us.

My problem is, I have casually dated several men since my husband's death. I have welcomed the companionship and the affection I had been missing long before my husband passed. My sister, who is somewhat reclusive, has expressed that I shouldn't be doing this and has gone so far as to say that she doesn't want to live in a "whore house." She also makes derogatory comments about any gentleman I have introduced her to.

I think that, at my age, I should be able to do what I wish in my own home. But because of how she reacts, I no longer have any gentlemen or women friends over because all she does is denigrate all of them. I'm tired of walking on eggshells around her. Are there any options other than asking her to move?

LIVING AS I WANT IN WASHINGTON

DEAR LIVING: No, there aren't. Your sister should not be ruling your social life. The sooner you help her find another place to live, the healthier it will be for both of you. Start NOW.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

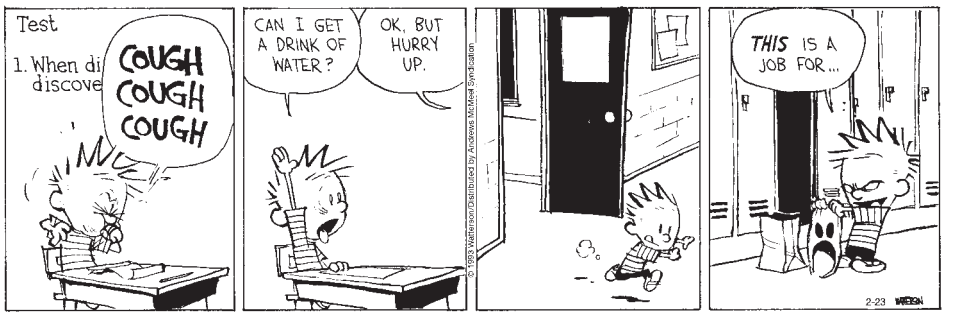
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

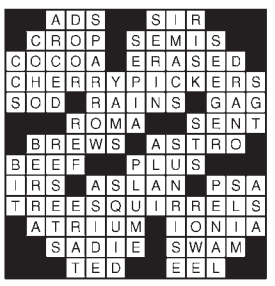
ACROSS

1 Great Lakes fish
5 Small ammo
8 Pride parade initials
12 Circle dance
13 —-Manuel Miranda
14 Sleek, in car lingo
15 Friend
16 Fuss
17 Traditional tales
18 "Count me in!"
20 "Pow!"
22 Slacker
26 Vaults
29 Dig in
30 Uncle, to Pedro
31 Border on
32 Whatever number
33 Vivacity
34 Solidify
35 Holy Fr. woman
36 "Jeopardy!" host Bialik
37 Power ballad by Taylor Swift
40 "Death in Venice" author
41 Flowering
45 Pack cargo
47 Bill of sale (Abbr.)
49 Deco artist
50 Pressing thing?
51 Born
52 Head, to Henri
53 Itsy-bitsy
54 Helium, for one
55 Chimney grime

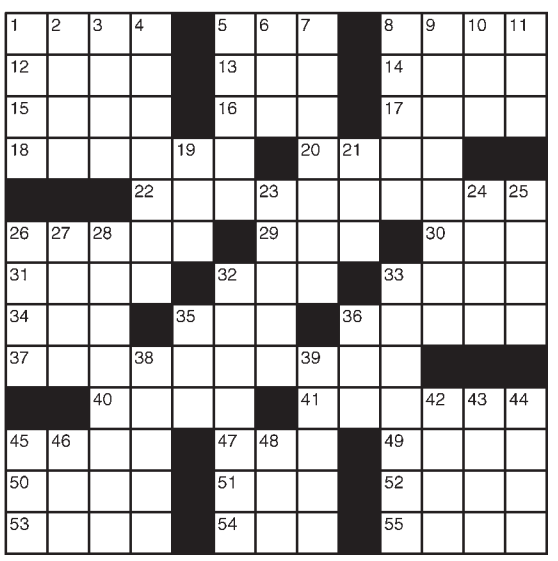
DOWN

1 Spiced tea
2 Actress Celeste
3 Web addresses
4 Civil War weapon
5 Propeller part
6 Auction action
7 Winter "no school" time
8 Susan Dey TV series
9 Euclid's study
10 "It's c-c-cold!"
11 Water-testing digit
19 Guitar master Paul
21 Very popular
23 Buy more Time?
24 Ovid's 53
25 Weaving machine
26 Long story
27 Cain's brother
28 Spectacular lunar phase
32 Making amends
33 "Rodeo" and "Swan Lake," e.g.
35 Sean, to Yoko
36 World Series gp.
38 Light brown
39 Roof overhangs
42 Sweet sandwich
43 Director Preminger
44 Bump into
45 Perch
46 Part of TNT
48 PBS funder

Solution time: 24 mins.



Yesterday's answer 2-23



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Emilia Jones, 21; Dakota Fanning, 29; Kristin Davis, 58; Patricia Richardson, 72.

Happy Birthday: Ease into the changes you make this year, and you'll be pleased with the results. Keep an open mind, but don't let anyone take over or cause you to act hastily. Handle matters yourself to avoid misinformation. Patience and discipline will help you get your timing down and your plan complete. Alter what's necessary, regardless of the decisions others make. Your numbers are 4, 10, 17, 21, 33, 36, 48.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Take on responsibilities. Do your best to show off your skills, insight and experience. What you do will determine how far you get and what to expect others to contribute to your success. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Do what makes you happy, update your image or learn a skill that helps you head in an exciting new direction. Keep the ball rolling, but remember doing something wholeheartedly will determine your success. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* You'll meet with opposition, but don't let that stand in your way. Make your plans clear and define what you intend to do with or without help. Socializing with serious people will give you better insight into what's possible. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Take whatever path makes you happy. Don't overdo, overspend or pay for someone else's mistake. Create a lifestyle that will help you achieve your objective and encourage you to reach out to people who can help you achieve your goal. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Mix things up a bit, and you'll enjoy your day. Expand your mind, take a course or get involved in something you've never done. Focus on love, romance or personal improvements. Shake things up and initiate the changes you desire. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Express your thoughts and adjust whatever isn't working for you. Incorporate a savings plan or concrete investment with little chance of depreciation. Long-term goals will give you the safety factor that puts you at ease with whatever path you choose. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Shed your lazy feelings and get to work. Don't wait for someone to take over or push you into something that benefits them more than you. Assess your personal and financial situations, then redesign your strategy to fit fads. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Don't limit what you can do. Clear a space that will encourage you to play around with ideas until you devise a plan to improve your life. An exciting partnership will develop if you discuss positive action and reform. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Express yourself, but don't raise your voice. Keep situations mellow and use charm to seal a deal without hassle. A positive attitude will help you succeed. Romance is favored, and unique plans for two will bring you closer to a lifestyle change. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stick to what you know and do best, and align yourself with the people you can count on for help. Take a unique path that offers a financial advantage, future opportunities and people you can rely on for support and contributions. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Get back to what you enjoy doing. Focus on projects, people and places that energize you. Choose what makes you happy. Spread a little joy to the ones you love. An adjustment at home will make your life easier. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Question anyone who appears to be giving you inaccurate information. Do your due diligence and find out firsthand whether an idea you have is possible. Someone from your past will be able to clear up a misunderstanding. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are aggressive, determined and opportunistic. You are emotional and creative.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			3					1
9	2							
			2	5		6		9
	3						6	
6	4			3				7
7		5	6	2	4		1	
2		9						5
8		4	1		2		9	
				8		4		

Difficulty: ★★★ 2-23

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

2	4	3	5	9	6	8	7	1
7	6	8	1	2	4	5	3	9
1	5	9	3	7	8	2	6	4
9	7	4	2	1	5	3	8	6
8	3	5	7	6	9	4	1	2
6	1	2	4	8	3	7	9	5
3	2	1	9	4	7	6	5	8
5	9	6	8	3	2	1	4	7
4	8	7	6	5	1	9	2	3

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Difficulty: ★★★ 2-22

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

NATIONAL CHILI DAY Solution: 8 letters

B	R	I	S	K	E	T	L	I	O	E	V	I	L	O
U	R	A	O	P	J	O	R	T	N	A	L	I	C	R
T	E	E	G	N	O	S	U	G	A	R	M	E	H	E
T	P	G	A	E	I	O	A	L	E	E	S	W	I	G
E	P	A	V	D	N	O	N	N	A	E	E	A	P	A
R	E	S	O	C	D	I	N	T	E	T	C	S	S	N
R	P	U	C	H	E	I	V	H	S	L	O	C	S	O
E	D	A	A	E	D	L	C	N	P	A	N	A	R	O
D	E	S	D	A	Ⓢ	R	E	E	R	S	D	L	E	R
N	R	H	O	Ⓣ	A	H	M	R	D	O	S	L	K	E
A	I	A	Ⓘ	D	C	E	E	N	Y	L	C	I	C	N
I	C	Ⓡ	D	T	A	B	A	S	C	O	U	O	A	A
R	E	E	I	L	O	C	H	I	C	K	E	N	R	B
O	H	K	C	I	H	T	O	P	K	C	O	R	C	A
C	A	Y	E	N	N	E	E	D	A	M	E	M	O	H

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Avocado, Bread, Brisket, Butter, Cayenne, Celery, Cheddar Cheese, Chicken, Chips, Cilantro, Coriander, Corn, Crackers, Crockpot, Diced, Dinner, Habañero, Heat, Homemade, Kitchen, Lunch, Meal, Meat, Olive Oil, Onion, Oregano, Red Pepper, Rice, Salt, Sausage, Scallion, Seconds, Share, Spoon, Stew, Stir, Sugar, Tabasco, Thick, Vinegar

Yesterday's Answer: Fasting

The NEW **Volume 70** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Mac McClung, now the NBA dunk champ, wasn't an unknown

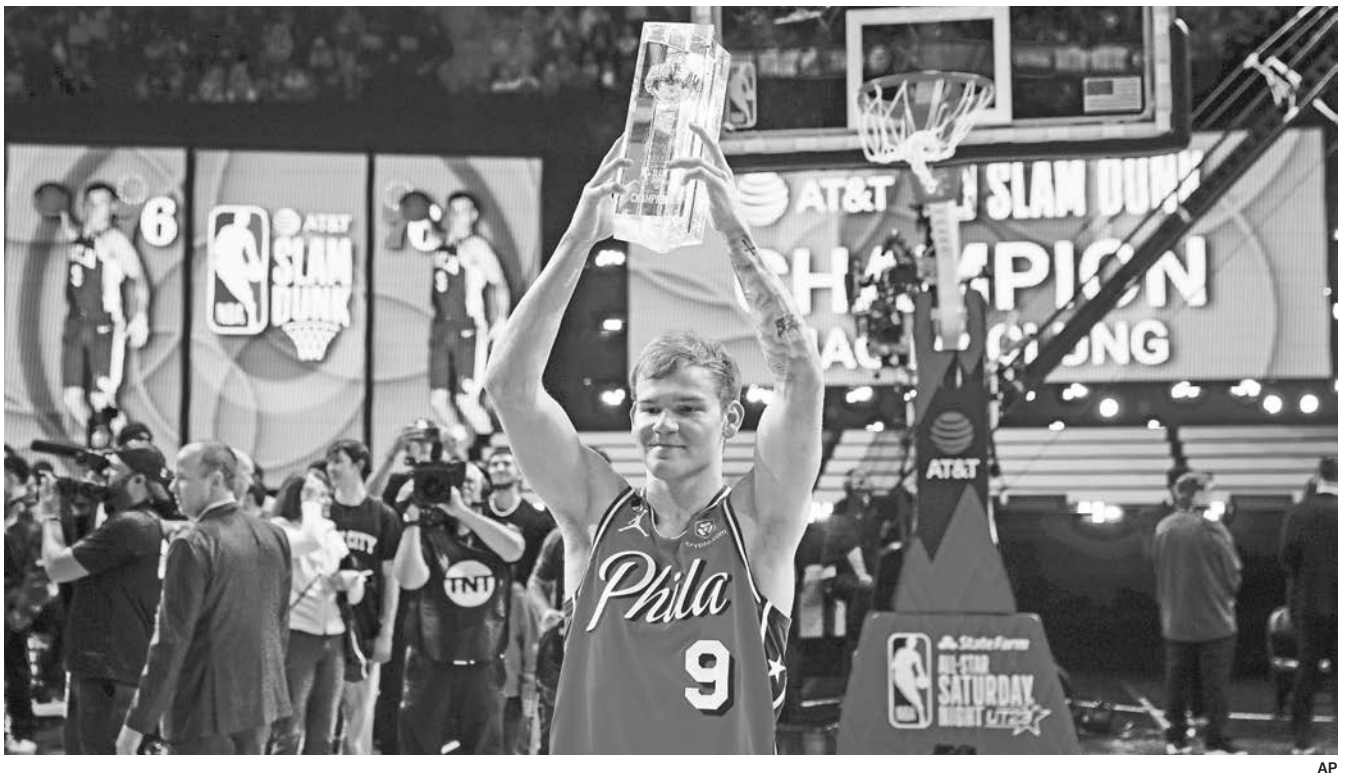
SALT LAKE CITY (AP)— Mac McClung was not exactly an unknown.

Long before he won the dunk contest at NBA All-Star Saturday, he was a YouTube phenomenon. It's impossible to add up all the views that videos of McClung — everything from dunks to documentaries — had gotten, but it was in the hundreds of millions.

Yet it all seems different now, after this 6-foot-2 boyish-looking guard from a small town in Virginia with trampolines for legs and only two NBA games on his resume became the league's dunk champion and finally brought buzz back to an event that had been more criticized than celebrated over the last few years.

"He saved the dunk contest," Shaquille O'Neal said, and countless others echoed those sentiments.

Time will tell if they're right. But an event that is designed to create unforgettable moments — Michael Jordan taking off from the foul line, Vince Carter saying "it's over" after a dunk, Aaron Gordon jumping over the Orlando Magic mascot, Dwight Howard donning the Superman cape — got a massive shot in the arm from a guy who now has more dunks in the contest (four) than he does in actual NBA games (one)."It's a cliche, but you can really do whatever you want to do," said McClung, who is on a two-way contract with the Philadelphia 76ers and playing in the G League. "I've had so many people even at the highest level ... if you are a young kid, and someone who is an inspiration to you, someone that you respect so much tells you that you can't do it, it doesn't matter. Literally, if you manifest and put your mind to it, you can literally make your life and reinvent yourself every day."



AP

Mac McClung of the Philadelphia 76ers reacts after winning the slam dunk competition of the NBA basketball All-Star weekend Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

The reactions from NBA players watching the show, both in Salt Lake City and elsewhere, were amazing.

"Tough," Cleveland guard Donovan Mitchell shouted as he watched courtside, while several other All-Stars like Giannis Antetokounmpo — with his mouth open in disbelief — filmed the action on their phones.

Golden State's Stephen Curry said on Twitter: "Man was a viral (House of Highlights) high school dunk phenom, still working his way to the League, but lemme go get that dunk contest trophy right quick and bring it back to life!!! Unreal."

McClung knows he is an underdog story. He grew up playing football and baseball in Gate City, Virginia, before deciding sometime around sixth or seventh grade — standing barely 5 feet tall at that point — that basketball would be his priority.

He started going viral in high school for his array of dunks, and he has handled all the attention that comes with internet fame as well as he can for years.

"One thing with this game is you have to learn how to adapt," McClung told The Associated Press last year. "I want to be known as someone who can help a team, help a championship team, be a good energy guy and a good culture guy and a good locker room guy."

So if he was an unknown to NBA fans, that's maybe understandable. He had the final basket of the 2021-22 NBA season, breaking free for an uncontested reverse dunk to cap the Los Angeles Lakers' overtime win over the Denver Nuggets last April. That was his third, and most recent, field goal in the NBA.

But, even if he hasn't gotten to establish himself at the NBA level yet, there's no question that he can play. He broke records held by Allen Iverson and J.J. Redick in high school. He had big numbers at Texas Tech and Georgetown in college.

And now, he's a dunk champion. He's viral, again. Maybe this time the NBA door will open.

"I'm not really worried what other people think, good or bad," McClung said. "I'm just staying the course. My goal is to make an impact in the NBA, and I'm just going to keep working until that happens."

Source: Antetokounmpo going to New York for wrist exam

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Milwaukee star Giannis Antetokounmpo was scheduled to be in New York on Monday to undergo testing and get further evaluation on his injured right wrist, according to a person with knowledge of the matter.

The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday night because neither the Bucks nor Antetokounmpo released the plans publicly.

ESPN first reported that Antetokounmpo was going to New York, and it was later confirmed by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Antetokounmpo injured his wrist Thursday night in Chicago after attempting to block a shot. Antetokounmpo exited after only nine minutes and did not return. He had X-rays and Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer said at the time they came back clean.

But there evidently has not been much improvement in the wrist since. Antetokounmpo did not join his brothers as planned for the All-Star Skills Challenge on Saturday night in Utah — he was filled in for there by Bucks teammate and fellow All-Star Jrue Holiday.

AP

Giannis Antetokounmpo hold up the winning team trophy after the NBA basketball All-Star game Sunday, Feb. 19, 2023, in Salt Lake City.

And he played only 20 seconds in his team's victory over Team LeBron in the All-Star Game on Sunday night, getting a dunk on the first possession, then taking a foul and heading to the bench to basically become a coach for the rest of the night.

"Taking it day by day, try to get healthy," Antetokounmpo said after the game. "You know, obviously I had the incident three days ago. I don't think it's smart in any way to, you know, play a lot of minutes in the All-Star Game. At the end of the day, obviously, you want to participate, you want to run up and down, joke around, have some dunks, create some work. But at the end of the day, I feel you also have to be mature."

He did not give any hint that the wrist issue is more serious than a sprain.

"Hopefully, I can, you know, be available for my team when they need me," Antetokounmpo said.

Milwaukee has the NBA's second-best record coming out of the All-Star break at 41-17, a half-game behind Boston in the Eastern Conference.

Antetokounmpo is third in the NBA in scoring at 31.8 points per game, behind only Dallas' Luka Doncic (33.3) and Philadelphia's Joel Embiid (33.1).

NBA BRIEFS

Sources: Westbrook could make Clippers debut Friday

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Russell Westbrook could make his debut with the Los Angeles Clippers on Friday once he clears waivers, two people with knowledge of the matter said Tuesday. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because Westbrook still needs to clear waivers before he can sign with a new team. The nine-time All-Star was waived by the Utah Jazz on Monday. He is expected to clear waivers Wednesday since no team has the salary cap space to take on the remaining $47 million he is owed on his expiring contract. There is an outside chance Westbrook could practice Thursday if he signs and passes his physical. The Clippers—fourth in the Western Conference with a 33-28 record—host Sacramento on Friday in their first game after the All-Star break. ESPN was the first to report that Westbrook intended to sign with the Clippers. The move keeps Westbrook in Los Angeles. He is from the area, was a standout at UCLA and played less than two seasons for the Lakers before being traded to the Jazz on Feb. 10 as part of a three-team deal. The 15-year veteran is averaging 15.9 points, 7.4 rebounds, and 7.1 assists in 28.7 minutes per game. Westbrook would also be reunited with Paul George, his former teammate in Oklahoma City. George has been lobbying the front office to add a point guard. "It would definitely improve our team if we had that traditional point guard, to kind of get us in things and make the game easy," George said. "So, hopefully, Russell sees this and we figure something out."

Miles Bridges says he could be playing for Hornets by March

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP)—Miles Bridges says he may be back in the NBA soon, returning to play for the Charlotte Hornets. "It's been a long process," Bridges told The Associated Press on Tuesday night at halftime of Michigan State's home game against No. 17 Indiana. "I might be back in March." Bridges, who led Charlotte in scoring last season, has not played this season while under an NBA investigation. He pleaded no contest three months ago in Los Angeles to a felony count of injuring a child's parent, agreeing to do so in exchange for three years probation and no jail time. Bridges also has to complete 52 weeks of parenting classes, 52 weeks of domestic violence counseling and 100 hours of community service as part of the agreement. The charges stemmed from accusations that he assaulted his girlfriend in front of their two children in June, the Los Angeles County district attorney said. Bridges may face disciplinary action from the league. The restricted free agent spent his first four NBA seasons with the Hornets and was set to cash in on averaging 20.2 points, seven rebounds and 3.8 assists — all career highs — until his future with the team and in the league was put in doubt. Hornets general manager Mitch Kupchak, earlier this month, offered little in the way of the team's plans with Bridges moving forward. "The NBA is conducting an investigation and I don't know when that is going to end," Kupchak said. "When it ends, we'll have more information and we'll go from there. I'll leave it up to you to decide what kind of impact that had on our team this year." Bridges, who is from Flint, Michigan, averaged 17 points over two seasons with the Spartans before entering the NBA in 2018.

On the clock: New timer will affect more than just pitchers

SARASOTA, Fla. (AP)— As one of the game's top prospects, Grayson Rodriguez will probably make his debut for the Baltimore Orioles pretty soon, and then the 23-year-old right-hander can begin adjusting to the big leagues.

In one respect, he has a critical head start: Rodriguez has plenty of experience with the pitch clock that was tested in the minors and will now be used in the majors.

"I was a big fan of it," he said. "Obviously, it speeds up the game. As a pitcher, it's kind of what you want. Big league hitters take a long time to get to the plate. That drives me crazy, so this pitch clock kind of expediting the process, I like it a lot."

Not everyone is as sanguine about the new timers — and whether you're a pitcher, a catcher, a hitter or a baserunner, there's no hiding from this rule change. Of all of baseball's tweaks under Commissioner Rob Manfred, the pitch clock might be the one that affects the most players.

The clocks will be positioned behind the plate and beyond the outfield, where pitchers and hitters can easily see them. They'll count down from 30 seconds between batters. Between pitches, it will be 15 seconds with nobody on and 20 if there's a baserunner. The pitcher must start his delivery before the clock expires. After a pitch, the clock starts again when the pitcher has the ball back, the catcher and batter are in the circle around home plate, and play is otherwise ready to resume.

So efficient communication between the pitcher and catcher is important, because the clock is ticking. The batter has a responsibility, too. He needs to be in the box and alert to the pitcher with at least eight seconds on the clock. Batters can call time once per plate appearance, stopping the countdown.

"You kind of have to shorten your routine up to the plate, while I guess cleaning out the box or talking to the umpire or the catcher," said Atlanta outfielder Michael Harris II, last year's National League Rookie of the Year. "I kind of went through it in Double-A, so I kind of know how that works and how it can speed up the game, but I guess it takes some getting used to."

The goal is indeed to speed up play, specifically by limiting the parts of the game fans find particularly tedious.

According to Major League Baseball, the pitch timer reduced nine-inning games by a whopping 25 minutes last year in the minors, from 3 hours, 3 minutes in 2021 to 2:38. And other stats like runs per game, batting average and the rate of hit batters were essentially unchanged.

"The games were shortened, but not at the expense of game play," said Joe Martinez, a former big league pitcher who is now MLB's vice president for on-field strategy. "What was really removed from the game was that dead time — pitchers walking around the mound, batters fixing their batting gloves, taking extra pitches in the bullpen, walking in from there."

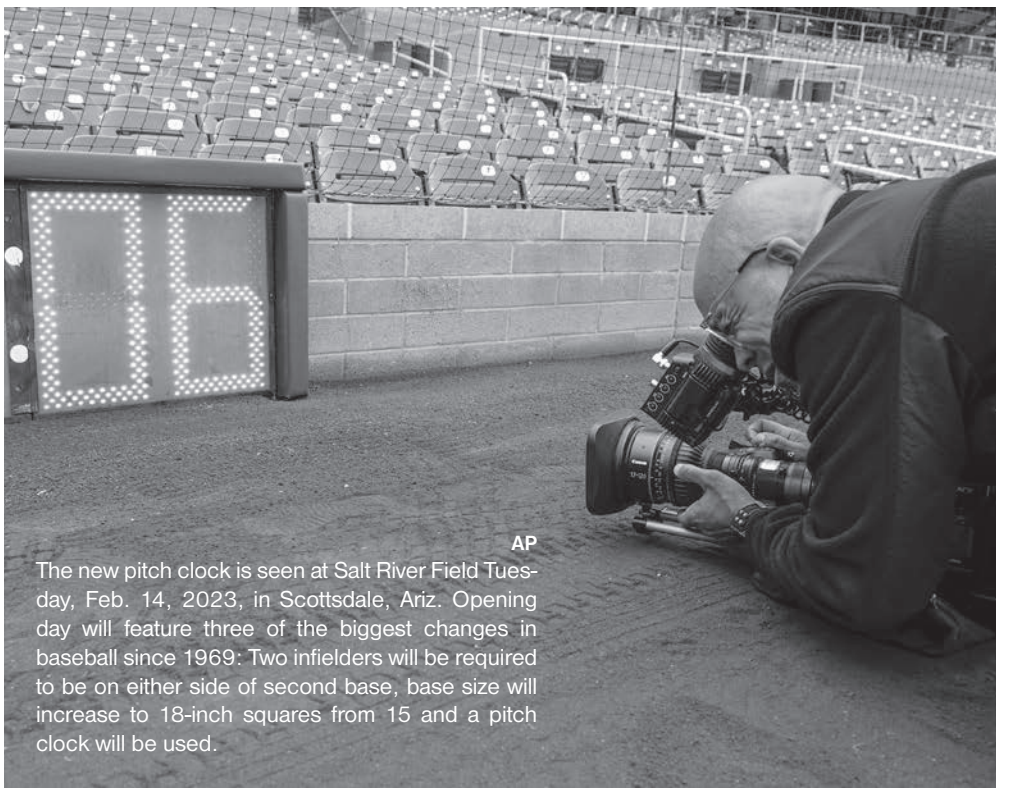
Games early in the season, in the second week, included an average of 1.73 violations. By week 24, that figure was down to 0.41. When surveyed, about 90% of both pitchers and position players said they adjusted to the pitch timer within about a month. If big leaguers get used to it that quickly, they should be ready around the end of spring training.

Still, there's a difference between compliant minor leaguers and big league veterans who are used to a certain routine — and the amount of information available to major leaguers can make pitcher-batter showdowns a mental battle in addition to a physical one.

"In this game, it's all about strategizing and really finding ways to get guys out. I think that's the unique thing about baseball nowadays," Pittsburgh right-hander Vince Velasquez said. "There's tons of talent that's spread around the league, and hitters are doing their homework just as much as we're doing ours, but I think it takes a little bit more time to kind of strategize and find ways to incorporate those things."

Velasquez doesn't like the pitch clock, and his teammate, catcher Kevin Plawecki, has concerns about the punishments.

"I feel like when you start doing automatic strikes, automatic balls, automatic runners advancing to bases, automatic runs scoring possibly, just based off of a step off, or a pickoff, to me I think that just changes the integrity of the game," Plawecki said.



AP

The new pitch clock is seen at Salt River Field Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, in Scottsdale, Ariz. Opening day will feature three of the biggest changes in baseball since 1969: Two infielders will be required to be on either side of second base, base size will increase to 18-inch squares from 15 and a pitch clock will be used.

When a pitcher fails to throw a pitch in time, the penalty is an automatic ball. When a batter isn't ready in time, it's an automatic strike. The clock would be easy to circumvent if the pitcher could simply step off the rubber or throw a pickoff to stall for time. To eliminate that loophole, pitchers are only allowed two disengagements per plate appearance. Pickoff attempts count toward that limit.

The clock resets on a disengagement. After a pitcher has used his two disengagements, he can still attempt a pickoff, but it better be successful. If the baserunner gets back safely, a balk is assessed and the runner advances.

The restriction on pickoff throws serves two purposes. It limits a tedious aspect of the game — fans sure are quick to boo pickoff attempts — and it encourages aggressive baserunning in a sport that's increasingly defined by home runs and strikeouts.

In the minor league test run, stolen base attempts went up from 2.23 per game in 2019 to 2.81 last year. The success rate improved from 68% to 78%.

"Any time they implement a new rule or something, you think you know what's going to happen, and then people kind of weaponize it to their advantage," said Philadelphia shortstop Trea Turner, who has 230 career steals with an 85% success rate. "Hopefully it's more stolen bases for everybody — just makes it more exciting."

MLB has made other changes in recent years to reduce the time fans spend waiting — limiting mound visits, for example, or sending the batter to first base immediately on an intentional walk.

Those rules, however, affect a limited number of situations. Even the automatic runner on second base — a drastic invention, to be sure — only comes into play in extra innings. The pitch clock, on the other hand, will be in effect from start to finish every game.

The hope is that players can adjust well enough that obeying the clock becomes second nature. Perhaps some of the more skeptical voices will even start to appreciate it.

"Maybe I'll like it, maybe it won't be as big of a change as I think," Plawecki said. "I don't anticipate it really being a huge issue, but it's something we're all going to have to be obviously cognizant of."

Major league teams searching for advantages with new rules

PHOENIX (AP)—It's a brand new day in the major leagues — potentially an even brighter one for base-stealers like Trea Turner and Ronald Acuña Jr., and most definitely a change of pace for veteran aces like Gerrit Cole or Yu Darvish.

The bases are bigger, and the pickoff rules are different. The pitch clock has arrived, and infield shifts are gone.

Sorry, Shohei Ohtani, you took too long to throw that pitch. Bryce Harper, get back in the batter's box. Xander Bogaerts, can't stand there when Mookie Betts is hitting.

Only one thing is certain to stay the same: Everyone will try to find an edge, aiming to take advantage of baseball's dramatic alterations.

"I think the one thing we know about our industry is to the extent there's an advantage to be gained, every team is going to be doing everything possible to try to exploit that advantage to the best of its ability," said Chris Antonetti, president of baseball operations for the Cleveland Guardians.

Those are the conversations that are dominating spring training this year after Major League Baseball approved a series of changes in September in an effort to make the sport more appealing to a younger generation turned off by its lack of action and leisurely tempo.

As players reported to camps in Florida and Arizona to ramp up their preparation for the season, Commissioner Rob Manfred expressed confidence that the changes would work — after what could be an occasionally bumpy transition period.

"I think you're going to see a game that moves along with more pace," Manfred said. "I think you're going to see more balls in play. I think that you're going to look at the field and see players positioned the way that most of us grew up seeing them positioned. And I really think that (you're) going to see a movement toward the very best form of our game."

The size of the bases has been increased to 18-inch squares from 15. The new pitch clock is 15 seconds with no runners on base and 20 seconds with runners. The increasingly frequent infield shift has been eliminated, and there is a limit of two of what MLB calls disengagements — pickoff attempts or steps off the rubber — per plate appearance.

"I think the pitch clock will be the most impactful for sure," Milwaukee Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "I mean I'm hoping that's the one that's most impactful. I hope fans notice a real improvement in the pace of the game."

The pitch clock helped reduce the average time of a nine-inning game in the minor leagues from 3 hours, 4 minutes in 2021 to 2:38 last season. A catcher is required to be in the catcher's box with nine seconds left on the clock and a hitter in the batter's box and focused on the pitcher with eight seconds remaining.

Penalties for violations will be a ball called against a pitcher and a strike called against a batter. And there almost assuredly will be some violations through the start of the season as players get used to the clock.

"I'm not worried about it," Chicago White Sox pitcher Lance Lynn said. "The hitters are going to hate it."

Under the new rules on defensive positioning, two infielders will be required to be on either side of second and all infielders to be within the outer boundary of the infield when the pitcher is on the rubber. Infielders may not switch sides unless there is a substitution, but five-man infields will still be allowed.

With the elimination of the shift, major league teams could get more creative with their outfielders. It's not hard to imagine a late-game scenario where a corner outfielder could move into a spot that a shifted infielder used to fill.

"At least for my lifetime, when a ball's hit in a certain spot, you feel like, at least when you're watching on TV, you feel like it's a hit and you look up and somebody's standing there," San Diego Padres general manager A.J. Preller said.

"So I think that'll probably take some getting used to, kind of seeing that shift back, and from a strategy standpoint, how that plays out."

The bigger bases are intended to help reduce injuries and increase stolen bases — due to their size, the bases are closer together by a few inches. There were 3,297 steal attempts in the majors last year, according to Sportradar, up from 2,926 in 2021 but a marked decrease compared with 4,365 attempts a decade ago in 2012.

All those bang-bang plays on the bases just got a little more interesting.

But the most intriguing change just might be the limit on disengagements. A balk is called for a third step off or pickoff unless there is an out, and the limit is reset if a runner advances.

What pitchers do with their disengagements — which ones keep one in their back pocket, which ones use all of them and which ones are willing to risk a balk with a throw over — will be closely scouted at the start of the season as teams look for a baserunning edge.

"There's a lot of gamesmanship here," Chicago Cubs general manager Carter Hawkins said. "So try to figure out how to best play it. I'm sure there'll be some cat-and-mouse games going on, and different pitchers will come up with different plans that we'll have to adjust to, and baserunners as well.

"I think that's exciting to be able to watch and some chances for some competitive advantages."

Tatagas, Hilitais on a roll in girls soccer

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Tanapag Middle School Tatagas and Hopwood Middle School Hilitais are on a roll in the 2022-2023 NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League after winning their games on Tuesday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

The Tatagas slipped past Dandan Middle School, 3-2, while the Hilitais found the goal multiple times against the Napu Riders for a 8-2 victory.

Xyriel Pascual broke through the net 15 minutes into the first half as both teams struggled to get their footing. Silence accompanied the setting sun, while the Tottots and Tatagas battled it out on the field until Pascual found an opening once again in the 21st minute.

The first half came and went and there was still no reply from the Tottots while the Tatagas' Hailey Benavente managed to score one more goal for a 3-to-nothing lead.

Then, when it seemed like the Tottots would pack it up and go home empty-handed, Jahsmin Ramon maneuvered the ball for a goal in the 40th minute. Things were picking up for the Tottots as the Tatagas were slowing down as Ramon made contact with the net again four minutes later, closing the gap by one point.

However, even with attempts at the goal before time ran out, the Tottos could not get past the Tatagas anymore and settled for the L.

In the earlier Hilitais-Napu Riders game, it was goals galore for the lizards as almost each attempt at the net stuck.

Though the Napu Riders' Selena Atalig drew first blood just seconds into the game, the Hilitais cleats were more clearly ball magnets. Atalig scored both goals for the team.

HMS' Yelynn Ha broke through in the 14th minute tying up the game and just four minutes later, teammate Alyssa Borlongan took the lead with a goal.

Ha ended up with two goals while Borlongan took it upon herself to get the most goals again with four. Kay Ann Costales contributed two goals.

The Hilitais are on top of the standings with 3 wins and 1 draw; TMS are at 2 wins and 1 draw; the Geckos still have 1 win and 2 draws; FMS is at 1 win and 3 losses; DMS is at 1 win and 2 loss; while the COVMS are still at 3 losses.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hopwood Middle School's Alyssa Borlongan, right, is seen in a file photo against Saipan International School during the 2022-2023 NMIFA-PSS Interscholastic Soccer League held at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

LAHUNN

From Page 20

Pacific Oceania," he said in a social media message to *Saipan Tribune*.

The 13-year-old did acknowledge that there were things to celebrate during his weeklong play in Sri Lanka.

"Me and my partner, Junior (John Kennedy Taufuna) won our doubles matches against Lebanon, Bangladesh, and Macau. Excitingly, they are the best moments in Sri Lanka and I have learned to never give up until the end of the match."

As to the lessons he learned in the 2023 ITF World Teams Competition Asia/Oceania Pre-Qualifying Events, "I need to work on having more tournament experiences to play the same even under a pressure with a warrior's mindset. Coach Jeff (Race) has been telling me to set my mind as a fearless warrior, also I have to take care of my body better to prevent injuries," he said.

Chae was very appreciative of the opportunity to play against the region's best in Sri Lanka as well as represent the CNMI and Pacific Oceania.

"First of all, it was a very good experience for me to play in a big tournament. The big highlight for this tournament is to play on a clay court that I've never played on. I got a lot of new friends from other countries too," said the 13-year-old from Saipan Community School.

She also thanked Pacific Oceania 14-and-under coach Raynal Singh for making her a better tennis player, adding that she became a better singles and tennis player during the tournament.

Race, for his part, couldn't hide his excitement for Lam's future in the sport.

"Honestly for me LaHunn was the most talented player in the tournament. He needs more competitive experience. He probably had less than any player there."

Race, who coached the boys 14-and-under Pacific Oceania team, said Lam played every day but the last day against Bangladesh when he had a toe injury. His ward's best singles performance was against Yemen.

"He played really well in that match. From my perspective I don't think that there were any players at the competition that were more talented than LaHunn, but he needs more competitive experience in order to beat some of them. Also our boys team, LaHunn included, really dominated in doubles every day since Day 2. We were 5-1 in doubles beating everyone except Kyrgyzstan."

And Lam did all these while nursing injuries, according to Race.

"On Day 4 his teammate finished his match against Yemen, also winning 6-1, 6-3. I was looking around for LaHunn and they said he had gone to the physio. I went there and LaHunn was laid out on the bed looking pretty bad. Blood was everywhere on his face and hands. There was a paper cup with about four ounces of blood in it on the floor. He'd had about the worst nosebleed I've seen. I explained to him that if he didn't play we would forfeit the match."

Pacific Oceania couldn't change players at that point under the rules, so Race asked Lam if he could just put on his shoes and wash up and see how he felt.

"He was a little wobbly as he walked out to the courts. The other boy wasn't there yet. I suggested that he just take out his racket and have a few swings to see how he felt… On Day 5 he had a toe injury from a hangnail but played and won. He didn't play great but his opponent wasn't feeling well and eventually retired. On Day 6 (last day) his toe had become infected and pus was coming out so he didn't play," said Race.

As for Chae, the CNMI sports hall of famer and CNMI national tennis coach, said he only heard good reviews from Singh.

"Coach Raynal Singh from Fiji was with the girls. He had a lot of good comments about her performance and effort on the court. Sometimes the No. 4 player barely gets a chance to play but Hannah played every day. I think she was able to play two singles and four doubles matches."

AYUYUS

From Page 20

JV defeated Tinian, 36-10.

In the second game day on Saturday, Mount Carmel School won against Tinian, 49-35; Agape Christian School defeated Rota, 42-33; Tinian slipped past Rota, 43-33; and in the junior varsity game, Rota beat Tinian, 24-20.

In the varsity standings, KHS leads with their 5 wins; MHS is second with 3-0; MCS is at 3-1; SSHS is at 2-1; Agape Christian School bumped up to 2-3; SIS is 0-3; and Grace Christian Academy is still 0-4.

In the junior varsity standings, MHS JV is still undefeated at 5-0, KHS and MHS JV-2 are both tied at 2-2; SSHS is at 2-3; MCS JV have yet to win with five losses; Rota is at 1-1; and Tinian is at 2 losses.

KHS 75 – Aldan 13, Satur 11, Dikito 9, Ortiz and Hocog 4, Camacho, Teacher, and Diaz, 2.

SSHS 69 – T. King Jr. 5, E. King Jr. and Lizama 3, Nabors Jr., Norech-Lazaro, and Aldan, 2.

Scoring by halves: 24-10; 47-17.

WOMEN

From Page 20

The women are vying for a chance to represent the CNMI in the 2023 Micronesian and Pacific Games.

For Labausa, a seasoned eight-year weightlifting veteran who is competing in the 81-kg weight class, training has been going well for her since she last competed in the first weightlifting qualifier in January.

In order for her not to burn out from weightlifting training, she said she played basketball with her Dandan team, winning the women's division of the 2022 Marianas Village Pride Basketball League last month.

As for what she expects in the competition against Guam and Palau's weightlifters, she said "I know I'll do good. This is my first time coaching and lifting in Guam, so I think that's going to be pretty fun. I know everybody else will do good because they've been working hard. I mean, even if everything you do in training is good, what really counts is what you hit on competition day."

Labausa said that she will try to break her competition best in the clean & jerk of 98kg. For the snatch, her competition personal best is 76kg.

As a coach for Pua and Rasa, Labausa said that their training has been going well. "We've kind of grown in the number of weightlifters in general and I'm really happy about that. I feel like everybody has been doing really good at their training with a lot of commitment and dedication being shown. I really appreciate that as well."

Labausa then thanked the CNMI Weightlifting Federation and the Northern Marianas Sports Association "for providing us the opportunity to be funded for at least one competition."

In the first qualifier last month, Labausa was the lone competitor in the 87-kg weight class and successfully completed all six of her lifts for a total of 173 kg. Her snatch lifts were 68kg, 71kg, and 74kg, while her clean and jerk lifts were 88 kg, 92kg, and 99kg.

For new lifters Pua and Rasa, who have both been lifting for about six months, they are also pretty excited to compete for the first time off-island.

Twenty-three-year-old Pua will compete in the senior 59-kg weight class, while 17-year-old Rasa will compete in the junior 57 kg.

Pua said for the upcoming competition along with being excited, she is also "getting super nervous, but I'm excited to see all the weight lifters there and compete with everyone."

For Rasa, she thinks she will do well in the competition too as she's "been putting in the work and so I expect a good outcome." Rasa said that she was actually inspired by the 2022 NMPMG weightlifters and decided to try out the sport herself. From then on, she's enjoyed it.

In the 59-kg weight class during the first qualifier last month, Pua and Rasa lifted a total of 93kg. Pua's snatch lifts were 35kg, 38kg, and 42kg, while her clean and jerk lifts were 45kg and 51kg. She failed to pull 56kg. Rasa's completed lifts for the snatch were 35kg and 38kg, while her clean and jerk lifts were 45kg, 50kg, and 55kg.

For Ichiuo, a 24-year-old Brabu Pharmacy staff who has been weightlifting for two years now, said about the upcoming qualifier, "I feel pretty excited about it and kind of nervous too because I don't know what to expect. But it's going to be a fun experience."

Ichiuo, who bagged a bronze medal in the 81-kg weight class of the 2022 NMPMG, will also compete in the same weight class as Labausa. Ichiuo missed the first weightlifting qualifier last month and will need to compete in the Guam competition and in the last qualifier next month.

When asked who will be her biggest competition in Guam, she said that she's unsure as they are strong competitors. "From both Palau and Guam, it will be really challenging."

She then thanked her coach John Davis, who is the president of the CNMI Weightlifting Federation, and her teammates "because we've all helped each other in a way from parts that we're struggling on with our lifts. Pieces from each of them really helped me grow into the person I am today."

Pua

Rasa

Mac McClung, now the NBA dunk champ, wasn't an unknown

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Tatagas, Hilitais on a roll in girls soccer

PAGE 19

Ayuyus undefeated in HS boys caging

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Kagman High School Ayuyus boys basketball varsity teams are still undefeated with five wins in the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League after their game last Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Ayuyus, led by speedster Lucio Aldan, won against Tinian Jr./Sr. High School, 47-17.

This big gap was thanks to the stealthy defense and steals by the Ayuyus' Frankie Satur and the 13 markers of sharpshooter Aldan. Satur put up double digits himself with 11 as he continued to play a pivotal role in the Ayuyus' win streak.

From the starting gate, the Stallions' gallop stalled to a trot throughout the game as they tried to maneuver the ball to each other, but with every opening, the Ayuyus found a weakness and either stole the ball or blocked their shot.

The most the Stallions could bank was 5 points made by Tano King Jr. in the first half with one free throw in the second.

All the while, the Ayuyus kept the Stallions at bay and reduced them to just 10 points in the first half including Tano King Jr.'s 4 points, along with a 3-pointer from Esteven King Jr., a field goal by Keith Nabors Jr., and a free throw by Edward Lizama.

By the end of the first half, the Ayuyus more than doubled the Stallions' score with 24 points—majority of which came from Aldan's aggressive attacks inside the paint.

It wasn't any better for the Stallions in the second half as Satur continued to pummel them on the defensive and added multiple points to increase their lead. The Ayuyus' Anthony Dikito also stepped up with 9 markers of his own, as Nobert Hocog and Alejandro Ortiz contributing 4 points each.

The Stallions then galloped wearily into the sunset as they could not stabilize their offense and succumbed to the 30-point loss.

LEIGH GASES
Kagman High School's Anthony Dikito is wide open for a lay up during their game against Tinian Jr./Sr High School last Friday in the 2022-2023 IT&E Interscholastic Boys High School Basketball League at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

In the other varsity bout that night, Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr./Sr. High School defeated Grace Christian Academy, 42-34.

In the junior varsity games, Saipan Southern High School JV beat Rota, 42-22; and MHS

See AYUYUS on Page 19

Women weightlifters to compete in Guam this Saturday

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Women weightlifters from the CNMI Weightlifting Federation will compete in their first off-island competition this Saturday, Feb. 25, in Guam's 2023 Youth, Junior, Senior, Olympic Weightlifting Championships.

Save for coach and 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games silver medalist Antonette Labausa, who has competed internationally and won three gold medals in the 2018 Micronesian Games in Yap and the Australian International Open, Riella Ann Ichiuo, Devine Pua, Kaya Rasa, Anniegail Manuel, and Pipit Ball are first-timers.

See WOMEN on Page 19

Labausa

Ichiuo

LaHunn, Hannah close out campaign in Sri Lanka

Chae

Lam

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

CNMI junior netters La-Hunn Lam and Hannah Chae showed a lot of promise during their stint with the Pacific Oceania Team in last week's 2023 ITF World Teams Competition Asia/Oceania Pre-Qualifying Events in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Lam finished the tournament with a 5-2 record, including a perfect 3-0 in doubles matches against players from Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Yemen, and Macau.

Chase, meanwhile, closed her Sri Lanka trip with a win against Macau's Emma Hoi Tung Ieong to salvage a 1-5 record against players from Malaysia, Singapore, Kyrgyzstan, and Macau.

Despite his stellar performance, Lam wasn't entirely satisfied with how he played in the South Asian country.

"I'm not happy about my performance in singles matches. I was distracted and lost my concentration. Although I had some injury issues, I could have played better if I was focused fully. I think I got a little more pressure this time because it's a team competition. I should play well for

See LAHUNN on Page 19